

School of Theology at Claremont



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CONNECTION
OF
SACRED HISTORY:

A NARRATION OF EVENTS

RELATIVE TO

THE RESTORATION AND RUIN OF THE
JEWISH NATION,

FROM THE BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY TO THE TOTAL DESTRUCTION OF
JERUSALEM BY THE ROMANS,

WITH SUITABLE REFLECTIONS THEREON.

BY THE

REV. JAMES GARNER,

Author of "Theological Dissertations," "Biblical History," Etc.

—o—

NEW YORK:
RELIGIOUS NEWSPAPER AGENCY,
21 BARCLAY STREET,
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INTRODUCTION.

THE utility of prefixing an Introduction to a book is that its particular design and character may be briefly shown, and to offer such explanations as may be necessary to a better understanding of the matter it contains. It may therefore be advisable, in the first place, to offer a few explanatory observations on the various terms used in the title page.

Every book should have a title expressive of its character and indicative of the matter it contains; for unless this is the case, it commences either with deception, or a vagueness which leaves readers to guess what the book really is. Charming and high-sounding titles do not always comport with the matter and style of the works to which they are prefixed; and, in some instances, one has but little relation to the other; which has led to disappointment and disgust. In the title of this book we have endeavoured to indicate what it really contains.

By "*Connection of Sacred History*" is meant a statement of historical facts, in relation to the Jewish nation, which occurred in the period between the close of the Old Testament history and the incarnation of our Saviour, when the history of the Jews, in relation to Christ and the establishment of the Christian economy, commenced. To which we have added several chapters on the Herodian dynasty and the condition of Judea after it became a Roman province; closing with the siege of Jerusalem, and the total ruin of the Jewish nation.

By the term *Nation* is meant, not merely a people like the Jews at the present time, distinct, having their own language, religion, and other peculiarities of a national character, but have lost their territory and power of self-government; but a people compact, having their own independent government and geographical territory, and thereby constituting dominion and power.

By *Restoration* is meant the restored state and condition of the Jews after their Babylonish captivity to their ancient inheritance, and the privileges of independent government to which they were raised in the Maccabean period.

By the term *Ruin* is meant all that is comprehended in the Roman conquest over them. First, in making their nation a tributary kingdom, then reducing Judea to a province, annihilating the power of their judicial courts, and afterwards invading the country, destroying their cities, reducing the inhabitants by slaughter and captivity, and finally by taking uncontrollable possession of the whole land of Palestine. These events and circumstances will be demonstrated in the following order. In the restoration of the Jews to a highly privileged position under the Persians, when they were allowed by the monarch of that great empire to return to, and possess the land of Judea, rebuild Jerusalem and the holy temple, and re-establish their divinely appointed hierarchy. The change of their condition consequent on the Greco-Macedonian conquest over Persia, and other oriental nations. The condition under the Greco-Egyptian kings (the Ptolemies of Egypt). Their struggles with their Syrian tyrants. The rise of the Maccabeans, and the establishment of the Asmonean dynasty. The declension of the kingdom under the reign of the Maccabean princes. The rise of Herod the Great. His alliance with the Roman Senate. The successors of Herod in a state of subordination to the Cæsars. How Judea became a Roman province. The Roman invasion under the command of Vespasian.

The siege of Jerusalem, and the complete overthrow of the Jewish nation by Titus.

History, regarded as a subject of utility, or useful instruction, should not be merely a record of events which have actually occurred, but a discriminate selection of the most important events, worked up with suitable reflections and appropriate observations, so as to impart the most valuable information possible to the reader. There are many things which take place in connection with social and civil life which might be recorded with the strictest fidelity, but are so puerile in their nature, and unimportant in their consequences, that they are totally unworthy of narration. Many historical works, of considerable value in many respects, and of great fame, are rendered much less valuable by the incorporation of such worthless superfluities.

History should be instructive, tending to make the reader both wiser and better,—wiser by the solid and useful information it imparts, and better by the moral lessons deducible therefrom. It should also indicate the road to power and influence, and how to obtain happiness by pointing out the way of duty. Therefore the subjects selected should be of such a nature as will engage the attention of the reader, and at the same time of sufficient importance to give exercise to his judgment and reasoning faculties. Taking this view of the subject, history may be thus defined: it is a faithful narrative of real events, recorded in such a style as will afford instruction and pleasure to its readers.

Events may be recorded so as to impart instruction without affording pleasure, and fables may be written in a charming style so as to afford gratification without increasing much correct and substantial information. But true events, judiciously selected, and properly narrated, with suitable reflections, will both improve the mind and delight the soul, and thereby produce beneficial effects, both morally and intellectually. We may also remark, that in writing history there should be

some definite and particular object in view. *First*, as to comprehensiveness, so as to guide the author in his selections; and *secondly*, as to the capacity and tastes of those whom he contemplates as most likely to be its readers. These objects have been constantly kept in view in the execution of this work, which is designed to furnish the reader with a clear, concise, and comprehensive history of the Jews from the termination of the Babylonish captivity to the final overthrow of the nation by the Romans, extending over a period of about six hundred years, expressed in language easy to be understood by common English readers, who are not conversant with exotical terminology.

The work is not a mere abridgment of any other history, or a compilation of historical records made up out of a number of other works, forming a consecutive chain of historical events, *without examination and reflection*; but it is a history cast in a new mould, under a new arrangement, bearing, as much as possible, the stamp of originality; expressed in the author's own style, and accompanied with suitable reflections and necessary explanations.

It is not designed to supersede the history of Josephus (relating to the same period), a work which has been pronounced by a learned author to be "the noblest and most venerable book" he ever saw. We may nevertheless observe that this "noble and venerable" production is, occasionally, at least, disfigured with fables, and contains many things, in the estimation of competent judges, which cannot be reconciled with inspired history, and will not stand the test of critical investigation. Many of these errors, real or supposed, we have carefully examined, and recorded our opinion thereon. We feel conscientiously bound to add, while referring to the writings of this distinguished historian, that, apart from all which may be deemed erroneous in his valuable production, it must and ever will be regarded as a work of great service and importance, inasmuch as it supplies a vast amount of useful and reliable information which

cannot be found elsewhere ; and therefore, if carefully studied and judiciously used, it affords great assistance both to historians and biblical students. To this able and unique work we are greatly indebted, and have frequently had occasion to make quotations from both the *Antiquities* and his accounts of the Jewish wars.

The present volume is not designed to rival the learned and elaborate production of Dean Prideaux, a work which contains a great amount of erudition and accurate information on almost every subject pertaining to Jewish history and the associations of the Hebrews with the surrounding nations. This work has been critically examined by the celebrated Le Clere, who has taken some objection to certain parts of it, but his exceptions are thought by other competent judges not to be of great importance. Some of these supposed errors we have nevertheless noticed, as we have had occasion, when comparing the conflicting opinions of different authors. We may here remark, that Dr. Prideaux's work contains not only the history of the Jews from the reign of Ahaz, from which period he dates the decline of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, but also that of the neighbouring nations and the Roman empire ; that is to say, he writes at considerable length on these nations.

The particular reason assigned by Prideaux for entering so largely and circumstantially into the military and civil history of these nations was to demonstrate to his readers the fulfilment of divine prophecy, especially those recorded in the Book of Daniel ; the affairs of these nations having been complicated with the history of the Jews and the predictions of their ancient prophets. Therefore, in order to show a verification of those prophecies, he dwells at length on the history of Persia, Syria, Egypt, and Greece ; and for the same reason he incorporates many historical events of the mighty conquests of the Romans up to the commencement of the Christian era. But as our design has not been to deal particularly with this peculiar feature of

history, which we think might be done to greater advantage in a separate work, no more is said about other nations than what appeared necessary to a proper understanding of the condition and political position of the Jews.

We have deemed it necessary to consult Prideaux, as well as Josephus, on most subjects, and also to compare their statements with several other historians of acknowledged authority. And having done this, we have not hesitated to give legitimate exercise to our own reasoning powers, and then faithfully record the result of our deliberations and reflections.

The dates given have all reference, either retrospectively or prospectively, to the vulgar era of Christ's incarnation, believing this method to be the most simple and easy to be understood by the generality of readers. Beside, what is said to be the true time of our Saviour's birth is a subject of dispute among the learned. Some place it two years, and some even four years, before the vulgar era. And in fixing the dates from the creation of the world there is the same difficulty, because some reckon the creation at a more remote period in the retrospect than others. But in taking the commonly-received notion in reference to the time of Christ's incarnation we get clear of these difficulties, and avoid the apparent absurdity of recording events which happened to Christ one, two, or three years before he was born, and also of confusing the reader with various opinions respecting the date of creation. As to the necessity of such a work as the present volume, it may be remarked that, although several Jewish histories have already been published, of considerable merit, we think there is room for the one here offered to the public, some which have already appeared being unnecessarily large and complicated for common readers, and of course too expensive, while others are merely fragmental disjointed facts, selected without much discrimination, and are calculated to convey to readers but little correct historical information.

While we have studied to avoid everything superfluous and expletive, we have aimed to embody all that is essential to a *general knowledge* of the great and important events which took place in the Jewish nation during the period above specified. Little is said about the early Christians and their operations up to the close of this history (although they flourished in Judea and in the neighbouring province), for the reason more than once mentioned in the work, viz., as such particulars belong to the history of Christianity more properly than to the history of the Jews.

It is more than probable that the critical reader will detect some errors or mistakes, which in a work relating to the characters of numerous individuals, and so many circumstances and events, it is almost impossible to avoid.

On several particulars, after careful examination and calm deliberation, we have been led to differ in our conclusions from the generality of historians; but in such particulars we have studied to express our views in language of becoming modesty, leaving anything doubtful an open question.

With these introductory observations the work is submitted to the reader, hoping its circulation may prove acceptable and of service, as have the author's other works on Biblical History, Sacred Biography, Christian Theology, &c.

THE AUTHOR.

Stepney, London, May 1st, 1868.



CHAPTER I.

The Deliverance of the Jews, and the Siege of Babylon.



Inspired predictions fulfilled in the deliverance of the Jews out of Babylonish captivity—The Medo-Persians brought about the overthrow of Babylon—The joy of the Jews on leaving Babylon; but many of them remained in the city—The progress of their sacred work impeded by the Samaritans—The elevation of Darius Hystaspes to the Persian throne, and the condition of the Jews under his reign—Zechariah and Haggai inspired the Jews to resume their work—The Persian government favoured the Jews in their great undertaking—The Temple finished—The siege of Babylon by the Persians—The cruelty of the Babylonians in this siege—The stratagem of Zopyrus, a Persian commander—Destruction of the city—Prosperity of the Jews in their own country—Death of Darius—Rise and character of Zoroaster.



HE changes and chastisements to which the Hebrews were subjected during their first dynasty, established by David, is a subject of deep interest to every biblical student, inasmuch as it is calculated to unfold the dealings of Divine Providence with that ancient, chosen race, and to furnish important views of the character of God's moral government. In a former work we had frequent occasion to treat par-

ticularly on this subject, in relation to the more early history of the Jews, up to the period of their Babylonish captivity, subsequent to which we have but very little historical information of inspired authority. But we must bear in mind that the Hebrew prophets frequently foretold their deliverance out of captivity, and predicted what should befall them in after ages, and how Jehovah would deal with the nations with which they should become associated and oppressed, and what would be the final result of their apostacy and rejection of the Saviour.

Their deliverance, for instance, was particularly foretold by Isaiah and Jeremiah, and how it should be accomplished by the overthrow and destruction of their proud oppressors. "Behold I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver, as for gold they shall not delight in it. Their bows shall dash the young men in pieces ; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb ; their eyes shall not spare children. And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. For the Lord will have mercy upon Jacob, and will choose Israel, and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob, and the people shall take them and bring them to their place ; and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord for servants and handmaids, and they shall take them captives whose captives they were ; and they shall rule over their oppressors." Isa. xiii. 17-20, and xiv. 1, 2. And by the mouth of Jeremiah, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the

God of Israel, houses and fields, and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land ; concerning this city whereof ye say—it shall be delivered into the hands of the King of Babylon by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence ; behold I will gather them out of the countries whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath ; and I will bring them again unto this place, and will cause them to dwell safely, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.” Jer. xxxii. 15, 36-39. These predictions, with many others, foretold the return of the Jews to Palestine, and the overthrow of Babylon.

The taking of Babylon by the Medo-Persians brought about, under divine providence, the deliverance of the Jews after their seventy years’ captivity. For, no sooner had Cyrus and his invincible army entered the capital of the Chaldees, than they numbered with the dead the last independent monarch of that mighty and ancient nation, and forever blasted the glory and power of the “Chaldees’ excellency.” The illustrious Cyrus, who had distinguished himself in many glorious actions and extensive conquests, was destined by Jehovah to be the principal agent in bringing about the emancipation and partial restoration of the Jews. Hence, on the decease of Darius, his uncle, when he was firmly established as monarch over the whole Persian empire, he proclaimed liberty to the Jews, and allowed them to return to their own land. He also gave liberty to remove the sacred vessels which had been carried into Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, and gave every encourage-

ment to rebuild the temple and re-establish their religious institutions. Josephus asserts that the decree of Cyrus was produced by his reading the prediction of Isaiah, which declares that he (Cyrus) was to receive his kingdom and dominion from Jehovah, that he might perform the divine purposes in the restoration of the ancient people of the Lord.

The Jews, on hearing the gracious proclamation of the Persian conqueror, received the tidings with much joy and gladness. "The princes, elders, and chiefs of the tribe of Judah and Benjamin, united with the priests and Levites" and those who retained a strong patriotic attachment to the country of their fathers, and under the direction of Zerubbabel (then called Sheshbazzas) formed a grand muster, and commenced their march to the land whence they had been carried away in chains.

We may here notice that a great number of the Jews refused to leave Babylon. They preferred the splendour and pleasure of the renowned city and its surrounding country to the land of Canaan, and the melancholy desolation of the fallen Hebrew capital. Humanly speaking, this cannot be regarded as a matter of surprise. Many of them had been born in that great and opulent city, had risen to a degree of prosperity, and were not in circumstances to leave so abruptly. Only 42,360 availed themselves of the propitious decree of their deliverer. Many of the others, nevertheless, contributed towards furnishing necessary supplies for such as removed, and for the building of the sacred edifice; and no doubt that many of them, after settling their

affairs in Babylon, followed their brethren to Jerusalem. Those who went with Zerubbabel uninterruptedly and safely accomplished their journey, and soon, with overwhelming joy, found themselves upon the site of the holy city, which had been the grand centre of their ancient national glory and prosperity. Their first work was to restore the worship of the God of their fathers and to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem, and having made necessary preparation they commenced the undertaking. But their progress in this sacred work was soon seriously impeded and obstructed, not only by the Israelitish monarchs of Samaria, but subsequently by the Assyrian invaders, who swept away a great many of their population.

While the Jews were engaged in the rebuilding of the sacred edifice, and in the establishment of their state affairs, the Samaritans came to Zerubbabel (and the High Priest and Elders of the people) and asserted, that from the reign of Esarhaddon they had sacrificed to the God of Israel, and had been devoted to his service. And they moreover expressed a desire to be associated with the Jews, and to afford them assistance in the great work they were intending to accomplish. Ezra iv. 3. But these offers were abruptly refused. Either their sincerity was suspected, or the Jewish rulers considered that an alliance with such a mixed and impure race would be offensive to God. For though they professed to worship and adore the God of Israel, they associated with their worship the most abominable idolatry. This refusal created in the minds of the

Samaritans a deep-rooted and everlasting aversion to the Jews, for it was not eradicated even in the days of the Saviour. "The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans."

The incensed Samaritans, on receiving this refusal, immediately appealed to the Imperial Court of Persia, represented the Jews as a seditious and rebellious people, and insinuated that to allow them to proceed in rebuilding the city and the temple would jeopardize the tranquility and security of the empire, and suggested that search should be made in the national annals, where would be found records confirmatory of their statements. At this news the Persian king became alarmed, and commanded that search should be made; and when it was found that in the ancient city of Jerusalem mighty kings had reigned and ruled over all the countries, from the great sea to the river Euphrates, it was deemed prudent and necessary to act as recommended by the Samaritans. The labour of the Jews was therefore suspended, and their adversaries triumphed in their malignant success.

The Jews commenced to build the temple in the first year of Cyrus, or about 536 years before Christ, and they were obliged to desist, B. C. 522. The work, therefore, remained stationary for three years—until the second year of the reign of Darius Hystaspes.

It may be proper here to notice that Darius, spoken of in the Book of Daniel as King of Babylon, was *Darius Cyaxares*, with whom Cyrus shared the empire after the taking of Babylon. This Darius was con-

stituted King of Babylon, and Cyrus retired into Persia; thence visited many provinces of the great empire. But when his uncle (Darius) died, he reigned over the Babylonish province, as well as over all Persia. And it should be borne in mind that it was in the first year of this reign (of Cyrus over all Persia) that he decreed the emancipation of the Jews, and not the first year after the Babylonish conquest. A distinct understanding of these facts are necessary to a correct historical knowledge of the persons and circumstances mentioned in this part of Jewish history.

Darius Hystaspes was raised to the throne, according to Herodotus, the Babylonish historian, by means of a peculiar circumstance, which we need not detail, it being a nauseous story of jockeyship relative to Darius' groom and horse, by which means he outwitted his rivals, and quietly took possession of the imperial seat. The substance of the story runs thus:—Darius and seven princes mutually agreed that, on a set day, in the morning, their horses should be brought together, and he whose horse neighed first should be the acknowledged king. The groom of Darius, being instructed by his master, used certain artificial means which caused his horse to neigh as soon as they were brought together, on which the seven Princes immediately pronounced him King. The intelligent reader will judge the means made use of without using coarse verbiage or indecent language. Besides, the particulars of the case are not of any material importance for any one to know, and the truthfulness of the whole story is rather questionable.

About the time Darius Hystaspes was enthroned, God raised up and inspired two Jewish prophets, Zechariah and Haggai, to arouse the slumbering energies of the returned captives to commence rebuilding the temple. These divine messengers sharply reproved the Jews for their supineness and timidity, accompanied with various gracious promises and conditional threatenings, by which means they were again reanimated to resume their sacred work, though not without interruption. Their former enemies, the Samaritans, again exerted themselves to stop the work. But their inveterate malice became its own punishment, and recoiled in disappointment upon themselves.

The Persian governor, being informed of the resumption of the work, went to Zerubbabel and the chiefs of Israel and personally inquired by whose authority they were proceeding to rebuild the temple. The Jews, without mentioning that they were divinely authorized by the inspired prophets, simply asserted that they were the servants of the great God of heaven and earth, and were "rebuilding the home that was built many years ago—which a great king of Israel built and set up;" and then referred him to a decree made by King Cyrus respecting this work. The Satraps then sent to their Sovereign for instruction. Darius commanded that the archives of the kingdom should be investigated. The edict of Cyrus was discovered; and without hesitation, Darius adopted the policy of the illustrious Cyrus. And he moreover commanded his governors to afford all possible assistance to the Jews, that their work might be

speedily accomplished ; and also compelled the Samaritans to contribute to the erection of the edifice, which they would much rather have totally annihilated.

The temple was finished and dedicated in the sixth year of the reign of this Darius, with the solemnities of divine worship, and every possible demonstration of delight and ecclesiastical grandeur, 515 before Christ. Numerous sacrifices were offered, the passover was afterwards celebrated, and many of the Jews, who had been scattered throughout the length and breadth of the Persian empire, came to take a part, and share in the joys of the restoration of the nation. And no doubt thousands, about this time, being divinely warned, came out of Babylon, which was about to be destroyed.

The siege and partial destruction of Babylon the great, "the Lady of Kingdoms," which took place about this time, or soon after, deserves particular notice. Jerusalem was restored, and the temple built, while Babylon was being overthrown, which was according to divine prophecy. This great city, for many years, during the rise and glory of the Babylonish empire had been the most distinguished, opulent, and splendid city in the east ; and the Babylonians, who had proudly domineered over all surrounding countries, could not bear the idea of perpetual subjugation to the Persians, especially after Cyrus had removed the imperial seat to Shushan, as that would much diminish the grandeur, pride, and wealth of Babylon ; they, therefore, laid plans, and prepared for a revolt.

The Babylonians began to lay up stores and all

manner of provisions to supply themselves for many years to come, that they might be able, if necessary, to withstand a long siege. Thus prepared, they broke out into open rebellion. Darius being apprised of their condition and intentions to re-establish an independent monarchy, mustered a great force and besieged the city. When the Babylonians saw the numerical strength of the Persian army, and the skilful order in which it was planted round the city, they determined not to meet the enemy in the field, but to make every needful preparation for support and defence, to be able to sustain a long siege, which they evidently anticipated; and, relying on their immense resources and the strength of their fortifications, they thought the besiegers would be obliged to relinquish their position. But such was the preparation made by the skilful Persian General, and the determination of his army, that they continued to press the siege with unabating energy, until the Babylonians began to fear, in reference to the sufficiency of their supplies, when they had recourse to the most barbarous and desperate measures which ever disgraced a nation or people,—so revolting and scandalous to human nature that no language can fully describe them. In order that their provisions might last the longer, they agreed to draw together all the women and children and strangle them, whether wives, sisters, daughters, or infants, only every man was allowed to save one of his wives and a maid-servant to do the house-work.

In this siege, and what immediately followed, many

of the most terrible predictions uttered by the Hebrew prophets met with their fulfilment, and it is believed that the Jews generally, who were in Babylon ere the siege commenced, took warning and fled out of the city.

The army of Darius surrounded Babylon one year and eight months, but the besieged had still plenty of provisions, and a large quantity of land within the walls in a state of cultivation, so that there were no signs of surrender for years to come. And the immense height and thickness of the walls, with their hundred brazen gates, bade defiance to batteries, storms, and assaults. But what Darius could not do by military skill and prowess, Zopyrus, one of his chief commanders accomplished by stratagem. This devoted chieftain cut off his own nose and ears, and mangled his body all over with stripes. This was the first measure which he adopted, that he might secure the honour of being the principal agent in the taking of that great and invincible city, which for nearly two years stood proof against the Persian army, and the plans of its skilful general. What a singular, and 'apparently unlikely method to secure this honour. In this suffering and degraded condition he fled into the besieged city, where he feigned to have suffered all this from Darius, and then made such statements to the Babylonians as to gain their confidence, and being skilful in military tactics, he was at length made the chief commander of their forces, which trust he made use of to deliver the city into the hands of the Persians. For this heroic

and devoted act Darius rewarded him with the highest honours as long as he lived.

With the conquest of Darius commenced the destruction and ruin of this ancient and famous city, which had long been the pride and glory both of the Assyrians and the Chaldeans. For as soon as Darius took the city he reduced the height of the walls from two hundred to fifty cubits, and carried away the hundred gates. He punished the most guilty of those who had taken an active part in the revolt with death, and gave those whom he pardoned to the Persian conquerors for servants. We may here observe, as Dr. Prideaux remarks, "that the punishment of Babylon kept pace with the restoration of Judah and Jerusalem," which was foretold by Jeremiah the prophet. This will appear evident to any person who will take the trouble to compare the fall of Babylon with the restoration of the Jews.

It is noteworthy that the same year that Babylon was taken and spoiled by the King of Persia, the temple at Jerusalem was finished and dedicated for divine worship. From the time the temple was finished to the death of Darius, being a period of twenty-eight years, the Jews enjoyed peace and prosperity. In religious matters they were governed by their high priests, and in civil affairs by the heads of the tribe of Judah, though still in a state of subordination to the Persian governor of the province, west of the Euphrates. The Persians, during this period, were engaged in several wars and

bloody conflicts, but in them the Jews took no particular part.

Darius was uniformly favourable to the Jews during the whole of his prosperous reign. He died 486 years before Christ, much and deservedly respected by the Jews, who have several traditions concerning him, and the fate of the Persian empire after his death, which tales are unworthy of being recorded, as they serve only to show how ill they have been acquainted with the affairs of the Persian state. "And Josephus, in his accounts of these times, relates many things which would lead us to suppose he was not much better informed than his erring countrymen."

In the reign of Darius Hystaspes, there rose up one of the most accomplished and successful impostors that ever attempted to deceive mankind. His Persian name was Zaratush, but the Greeks called him Zoraasres. Much is said concerning this wonderful man in profane history, and some have asserted that he was originally a Jew, and servant to one of the Hebrew prophets, which is, at least, very questionable. His object was to restore magianism, and to so mix it up with Jewish theology, with which he was evidently well acquainted, as to give it the appearance of a new religion, which he professed to receive from God.

Several historians have written extensively on the character and success of this wonderful personage, the nature of his religion, and the occurrences of his eventful life. But our design being principally to bring

before the reader a brief history of the Jews, we shall not trouble him with any detailed accounts of either Zoroaster, or the Persian Magian sect, as their operations, though extensive and important throughout several of the Persian provinces, did not interfere much with the Jews of those times.





CHAPTER II.

The Campaign of Xerxes—Esther and Mordecai.

Xerxes, king of Persia, subdues the revolt in Egypt—Prepares to invade Greece—His vast army and navy—His defeat by the Greeks—Returns home in disgrace—Leads an intemperate life and dies an ignoble death—Artaxerxes raised to the throne—The opinions of several learned men, as to whether he was the person who married Esther, investigated—Defeats his brother's army in Bactria—National rejoicing—The great feast at which Vashti is commanded to appear—She refuses, and is deposed as queen—Esther, the Jewess, marries the monarch and becomes the queen of Persia—The story of Mordecai and Haman—The vision of the king—The version of the Targum—The national records searched—Haman in the presence of the king—His disappointment and mortification—A decree for the Jews to be destroyed—Queen Esther's intercession—Haman condemned and hanged—Remarks on the Book of Esther.

AFTER the death of Darius, Xerxes quietly ascended the throne, whether by the arbitration of Artabanus, uncle of the contending princes, as stated by Justin and Plutarch, or by the determination of Darius himself before his death, as asserted by Herodotus, is a matter of no consequence. Xerxes uninterruptedly took the imperial seat, and in

the first year of his reign confirmed to the Jews, at Jerusalem, all the privileges granted to them by his father.

Josephus, in his *Antiq. b. xi. c. 5*, has either quoted or invented an epistle from Xerxes to Ezra, in which he permits the return of all the Jews to Jerusalem of whatever description. They are also allowed out of the treasury of the empire the cost of the vessels of gold which they desired to consecrate to divine worship,—“that God may not be angry with me and my children, I grant all that is necessary for sacrifice to God, according to the law as far as an hundred cori of wheat.” In consequence of this indulgence, the same historian relates that not only the Jews in Babylon, “but those who were in Media came with their effects to Jerusalem. But the people of Israel, consisting of the ten tribes, are beyond the Euphrates, and are immense in multitude, not to be estimated by number.” These Israelites have been supposed, by Sir W. Jones, a celebrated oriental scholar, to have been the ancestors of the Afghanans.

The first object of the young monarch was to complete the preparations made by his father for an expedition into Egypt. And this being done, he soon completely subjugated the revolting Egyptians and committed the government to his brother Archemenes. The following year he prepared to invade Greece, which he contemplated would readily be accomplished, after which he expressed his hope to overrun Europe and acquire unlimited dominion. He was dissuaded from this

important undertaking by his uncle Artabanus, who ventured to expostulate with him on the folly of such a dangerous expedition. But on account of a vision, which was several times repeated, he determined to follow out his former design, therefore prepared for the conquest of Greece. He succeeded in collecting together a vast army, the land forces consisting of 1,800,000 men; and he had 1,200 vessels of war, beside a numerous train of attendants. With this immense army Xerxes commenced his march towards Europe.

We shall not follow this infatuated monarch and his enslaved millions through Phrygia, Colossæ, Lydia, and Sardis, along the banks of Caicus, and across the Hellespont, or attempt to describe the order of his marches, the dresses, weapons, and habits of his troops, and the circumstances attending this wonderful expedition, as such particulars would not comport with our design and province. We cannot learn with certainty whether or not the Jews took any part in this expedition. Such are the conflicting opinions of both ancient and modern historians that we cannot safely conclude. But it seems reasonable to suppose that when Xerxes called on all other nations of his dominions to follow him to this war the Jews also would bear a part.

Xerxes was defeated by the Greeks, and returned home, after losing his army and navy, in trouble and disgrace. He then gave way to the vilest passions, and died an ignoble death. One historian, who designates Xerxes "an intemperate madman," says: "the reign of Xerxes was, on the whole, propitious to the inhabitants

of Jerusalem, for he spared their city and temple from the plunder and devastation which accompanied his progress through his unfortunate dominions. When irritated to phrensy by the ignominy of his shameful flight from Greece, and while the graven images of Babylon were thrown to the ground, and the stupendous temple of Belus was transformed into a heap of vitrified ruins, the Jews, who had so lately been miserable captives in that mighty metropolis of the east, dwelt safely in the city which Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed, and performed their sacrifices in tranquility."

Xerxes, after his rash and unsuccessful adventures, gave himself wholly up to luxury and ease, minding nothing but the gratification of his pleasure and lusts, sank into contempt with the people, when Artabanus, the captain of his guards, conspired against him, and having drawn Mithridates, one of the eunuchs of his bed-chamber into the plot, caused Xerxes to be slain while asleep in his bed, and then by a cruel misrepresentation of the affair, imputed the King's death to Darius, his eldest son, whom he accused to Artaxerxes, his third son, as a parricide. The young Prince, rashly believing the statement of Artabanus, immediately, without examining the case, slew Darius.

The next heir to the throne was Hystaspes, the second son, but he being in one of the distant provinces, as governor, the real murderer of Xerxes contrived to place Artaxerxes on the throne; this being the object at which he aimed. But his ultimate design was to seize it for himself and his heirs (for he had seven sons

in great power, and dignified offices), and thereby establish a new dynasty. But before he could complete this ambitious design Artaxerxes discovered the whole plot, and caused him to be beheaded in a counterplot, and by this measure Artaxerxes secured for himself the possession of the kingdom, which he held for forty-one years.

This king, in Scripture, is called Ahasuerus as well as Artaxerxes. He was the same who took Esther, the young Jewess, to wife; the particulars of which are recorded in the Book of Esther, and form a canonical part of the Old Testament. We are aware that some great men differ from this opinion. Archbishop Usher, for instance, says Darius Hystaspes was the King Ahasuerus who married Esther, and that Artystona was the identical person who was afterwards called Esther. And also that Atossa was none other than Vashti, the former queen. Dr. J. Andrew, in his “Abstract of the Chronology of the Old Testament,” says, “Darius Hystaspes, whose name had formerly been Ochus Assarus or Ahasuerus, married Atossa or Vashti, daughter of Cyrus the Great, otherwise known by the name of Queen Esther.” This, to say the least of it, is a piece of chronological confusion. If we rightly understand the learned doctor, he makes the names, Atossa, Vashti, and Esther all to signify the same person, *i.e.*, that Atossa was the daughter of Cyrus, that she was called Vashti, and that this Atossa Vashti was Queen Esther, the Jewess. This, we think, cannot be correct.

We should be sorry to commit ourselves, and our

readers, to statements so confused and contradictory. Herodotus positively asserts that Artystona was the daughter of the famous Cyrus, and consequently she could not be Esther, the Jewess. And as Atossa was held in high esteem by Darius until his death, she could not be the Vashti who was divorced. Moreover, Herodotus says Darius had four sons by Atossa after he was made king, besides daughters; which could not have been the case if she was Vashti, who was divorced in the third year of his reign.

Dr. Prideaux furnishes further evidence on this subject in favour of Artaxerxes being the Ahasuerus who married Esther. Scaleger is of opinion that Xerxes was the Persian king referred to in the Book of Esther, and that Hamestres, his queen, was the Esther of the Bible. But this really could not be the case. Hamestres was altogether a woman of a very different character. She was a person notoriously loose in her conduct, and was frequently accused of adultery; besides this, Herodotus says, "Xerxes had a son by Hamestres, who was marriageable in the seventh year of his reign," therefore it was impossible for her to be Esther, who was not married to Ahasuerus until he had been king seven years. Josephus also positively informs us, in his *Antiq. b. xi. c. 6*, that it was Artaxerxes Longimanus who married Esther. And the Septuagint, throughout the whole Book of Esther, translates Artaxerxes, Ahasuerus; and Severus Sulpitius and many other writers, both ancient and modern, of acknowledged authority, come to the same conclusion.

This King Artaxerxes, or Ahasuerus, shewed greater favour to the Jews than any of the previous kings of Persia; which may readily be accounted for when we read the Book of Esther. This young and admirable queen was of the Jewish race. She not only possessed many personal charms, but was also discreet and prudent in her conduct; and, feeling much interested in her own nation and people, she used her influence in favour of their freedom and prosperity. Such an advocate in the very bosom of the monarch was of incalculable advantage to the Jews.

The circumstances which led to Esther's promotion to the highest position in this great and mighty empire are well known to every Bible reader, and well deserve our particular attention, for in connection therewith we see the hand of Divine Providence. Artaxerxes, after having defeated the army of his brother in the province of Bactria, settled himself in the peaceable possession of the whole Persian empire. He then appointed a time of feasting and rejoicing on this account for the term of 180 days, and at the conclusion of this national festival he made a special feast for all the princes and people who were in the royal city Shushan, and Vashti made a like feast for the entertainment of the women. When the king's heart was merry with wine, he commanded the chamberlains to bring the queen before him, arrayed in her royal apparel, that he might show the princes and people her beauty, for she was exceedingly fair. But the queen, being a modest and sensible lady, as well as a beautiful person, would not comply

with his vain and indecent wishes; she therefore promptly disobeyed his command. For this act of prudence, dictated by good sense, she was put away for ever from being his wife. This was done through hearkening to the advice of his vain and crafty counsellors.

The king having thus disposed of his wife, adopts measures to secure another in her place. A number of fair virgins were chosen from the various provinces of the empire and brought before the king, that he might choose from among them one he liked best to be made queen in the place of the virtuous and noble-minded Vashti.

A certain Jew, named Mordecai, who was most likely one of the porters of the royal palace, for he daily attended at the king's gate, having adopted Esther, the daughter of his uncle, Hadassah, influenced her to present herself as a candidate for the king's future wife, and queen of Persia. This, on the part of Mordecai, was a very bold step, and required to be managed with great prudence, lest, in the event of a failure, he might subject himself and the Jews to punishment for the ambitious attempt of raising a lady of their own race to such an exalted and influential position. This young and beautiful damsel so attracted the monarch that she soon gained his admiration and affections, and was ultimately exalted to the highest honour which he could bestow. And her conduct after she was made queen tended only to perpetuate the esteem and regard which had been excited by her charms as a woman. The elevation of Esther to this supreme position of rank

and honour has been looked upon by many as an admirable arrangement of Providence for the deliverance of the Jews from the direst peril to which they were exposed, and for the final and complete establishment of their nation and religion in the land of their fathers. And this opinion is certainly not groundless, but well sustained in the events and consequences which followed. For the cruel project of Haman, had it not been overruled, might have led to the destruction of millions of unoffending and defenceless Jews, and the subjugation of the whole of the remaining Hebrew population in the Persian empire to bonds and slavery.

Let us carefully review the leading particulars of these events. “And Haman said unto King Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they the king’s laws: therefore it is not for the king’s profit to suffer them. If it please the king, let it be written that they be destroyed: and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king’s treasuries. And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman,” . . . and said, “The silver is given to thee, the people also, to do with them as it seemeth good to thee.” Haman having obtained the ring of the misguided monarch, as a token of his royal assent to this sanguinary proposition, the terrible edict was transmitted, with all possible speed, to the remotest parts of the empire, and on the tenth day of

the month Adar following all the Jews in Asia were to perish in one indiscriminate and general slaughter.

While the malignant and ambitious Haman was thus determining to glut his remorseless revenge against poor Mordecai and the whole Jewish nation, and the Jews were lamenting in despair throughout every part of the empire, for "There was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes" (ch. iv. 3), Mordecai (whose conduct, according to the pretext of Haman, was the cause of all this misery) encouraged and stimulated Esther to intercede with the king for the abrogation of the cruel edict. This was a critical moment. Esther knew that the punishment of death was awarded to any individual who should dare to enter into the inner court, in the presence of the king, without a regular summons, unless he stretched out the golden sceptre which he held in his hand. And from his previous conduct to Vashti she had reason to doubt her own safety in this case. But she nobly hazarded her life for the salvation of her people. She said "I will go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish." This was the noble and daring language of this truly patriotic and devoted queen. She thus approached the king, and happily the sceptre of life was held out. And the king, while gazing on the brilliancy and beauty of his beloved queen, was so filled with admiration that he promised her whatever she requested should be granted, even to the half of the kingdom. The prudent queen waived her particular request for a better

opportunity, and simply expressed a wish that the king and Haman would be present at a banquet which she had prepared. This was readily complied with; and Haman, transported with joy, returned from the royal palace to his family, whom he made acquainted with the great honour conferred upon him. And feeling assured of his plans and designs against the Jews being carried out without restraint, at the instigation of his wife he forthwith erected a gallows of fifty cubits high, on which he determined poor Mordecai, the chief object of his malice, should be suspended, little thinking that on that very gallows himself should shortly suffer as a monument of retributive justice.

That night the king could not sleep. On this subject the Targum says, “the king had a dream, in which he saw the similitude of a man, who spake these words to him: ‘Haman desireth to slay thee, and to make himself king in thy stead. Behold he will come unto thee early in the morning, to ask from thee the man who rescued thee from death, that he may slay him; but say thou unto Haman, What shall be done for the man whose honour the king studieth? And thou shalt find that he will ask nothing less from thee than the royal vestments, the royal crown, and the horse on which the king is wont to ride.’”

Josephus says nothing concerning this vision or dream, but simply follows the sacred text, with some little amplification. But the abrupt manner in which the king proposed the question concerning the man whom the king delighteth to honour, as also the early attendance

of Haman in the court, indicates that Providence was interposing. And the king might have had such a visitation and communication during the night, as stated in the Targum. However this may be, by a search of the records, which was made during the night, the king found that Mordecai had never been rewarded for his loyalty concerning the conspiracy of Bigthana and Teresh against the king's life. And the monarch was so intent on this subject that immediately on Haman making his appearance he proposed the above question, but did not mention either the man or the deed. Therefore Haman, who up to that time had been in high esteem with the king, reasoned within himself that he certainly was the man on whom the king intended to confer some peculiar and distinguished honour, and consequently answered him accordingly (as we find recorded in the Book of Esther). And the king commanded Haman, then his most distinguished minister, to confer this honour on Mordecai, whose life he had prepared to take away. Haman would be much disappointed and mortified; but he was obliged to obey the king's command, after which he returned home in rage and despair.

The same evening Haman was again summoned to attend the queen's banquet, at which the king enquired of Esther what was her petition and request, to which she replied, both artfully and honestly, "O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request: for we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish." The king, on hearing this, speaks like a man confused and en-

raged, "Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so?" Dr. A. Clarke says the original reads—"Who? He? This one? and where, this one? He, who hath filled his heart to do this?" As though vexed and confounded with the horrible nature of such a diabolical conspiracy. And yet he must have been aware of it, for we read in the third chapter that the king agreed with Haman that the Jews should be destroyed, and that letters were sent by the king's posts into all the provinces, "to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirtieth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey." But the probability is that the king never thought of his beloved queen being included in this general slaughter. It is even possible that at the time he agreed to destroy the Jews he did not know that Esther was a Jewess; for in the preceding chapter we read, "Esther had not showed her kindred, nor her people." The way and manner in which the queen commenced her petition struck the king with horror and confusion. "O King, if it please thee, let *my life* be given me at my petition." He abruptly exclaimed, "Who is he, and where is he, that" will presume to take away the life of the queen, whom I most tenderly love? The cruel culprit, who already felt his doom, was present. Esther confronted her adversary, and directing the attention of the king to Haman, said, "The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman." On hearing this the king was so agitated that he rose from

the banquet and retired into the garden, while guilty Haman continued imploring the queen's pardon. And falling on his knees, while she continued to sit on her couch, very probably near to her, the king returned in great anger, and rashly accused him of vile intentions towards the queen. This he did in the heat of his unbridled anger—for it was most unlikely that Haman, in such circumstances, bad as he was, should have any thoughts of perpetrating such an act. One of the king's chamberlains then pointed out the gallows erected by Haman, on which he intended to have hanged Mordecai. When the king saw it he was enraged to madness, and immediately commanded that Haman should be hanged thereon, and Mordecai elevated to his place. The Jews had full permission to defend their persons, and avenge themselves on their enemies. "And there were slain by the Jews that were in the country and in the cities 75,000 of their enemies" besides the 5,000 that were slain in Shushan. Mordecai became a favourite with the king, and assisted him in the government of the nation. Josephus says, "He lived with the queen: so that the affairs of the Jews were, by their influence, better than they could have been hoped for, and this was the state of the Jews under the reign of Artaxerxes." Book xi. c. 6.

It is very singular that the name of God is not once mentioned throughout the whole Book of Esther. This has given rise to a great difference of opinion with regard to its authenticity or authorship. Some have attributed it to Ezra, others to Nehemiah, others to

Mordecai, or Mordecai and Esther jointly ; while some of the ancient fathers doubted its authenticity, and the divine name being omitted, they deemed it unworthy of a place in the sacred canon. The most probable opinion is that advocated by Horn, viz., that the whole, with some explanations and adaptations, were extracted from the Persian annals by Ezra and Nehemiah, or Mordecai. And this may account for the several peculiarities of the book, such as the omission of the divine name, and no recognition of God's providence, the Jews being spoken of in the third person, the numerous parenthetical explanations which appear to have been necessary, and the many particulars respecting the Persian court and the domestic affairs of the king.

After Mordecai's elevation to the office formerly sustained by Haman he would have access to the national records, and feeling interested in the particular circumstances which brought about his promotion and the salvation of his people, he might cause a transcript thereof to be made for the use of Ezra, the Jewish scribe, who translated it into the then living language of the Hebrews, and placed it with the sacred writings of the synagogue.

But, taking this view of the subject, its inspiration and utility may be called in question. If the book is in substance only a selection or compilation of heathen records, in which divine providence is not recognised and the name of Jehovah not even so much as mentioned, why should it be regarded as a sacred book ? In answer to this we may remark,

1. God might see fit in the order of his providence to cause the heathen to bear record to his power and guardianship over his people when in subjection to the powers that be.

2. Ezra was undoubtedly under divine inspiration, or divinely superintended when he compiled and regulated the sacred books ; and in this case he was unquestionably under divine guidance.

3. The Book of Esther is a most valuable appendix to the Hebrew chronicles, showing, as it does, the state and condition of the Jews when under tribute and scattered throughout the various provinces of the Persian empire, and how God watched over them and protected them from their enemies. It also accounts for the peculiar favours bestowed upon them by the Persian king at this particular period of their history. Without this book we should be at a loss how to understand other historic facts recorded in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Besides its historical use, it teaches an important moral lesson, which no doubt is one grand design of this history being incorporated in the sacred volume. We see how dangerous it is to allow ambition, pride, and selfishness to lead us to deal cruelly and unjustly towards our fellow-men, as did Haman.

In the course of divine providence, men frequently meet with those evils which they have been the means of inflicting on others.



CHAPTER III.

The Restoration of Jerusalem—Ezra and Nehemiah.



Ezra, with a number of the Jews, goes to Jerusalem—Ezra's ancestors—His character—Some particulars respecting his journey from Babylon to Jerusalem—The moral condition of Jerusalem when he arrived—His great distress of mind—He acts as the governor until the arrival of Nehemiah—Ezra's death—His character, and labours—The various opinions of learned men as to what he did in relation to the sacred books, *Keri Celih*—Hebrew vowel points—Ezra superceded by Nehemiah—The Persian king appoints Nehemiah governor of Judea and Jerusalem—Historical sketch of Nehemiah, and the great work which he did in Jerusalem—He is opposed by the Samaritans and Arabians—His skill, courage, and patriotism—His death.

IT was during the reign of Artaxerxes, in the year 458 B. C., that Ezra and seven of the king's chief counsellors obtained a commission to go to Jerusalem, with as many of the Jews as thought proper to accompany them. Ezra was invested with full authority to restore and settle the state affairs, reform the Jewish Church, and to regulate and govern both Church and State in Jerusalem, according to their own laws and usages, so far as it related to the internal polity and ecclesiastical government of the Jews. This

extraordinary favour and plenary authority were no doubt obtained at the solicitation of Esther, being prompted and directed by Mordecai.

Ezra was a man of considerable eminence, being a priest and a descendant of Seraiah, the high priest who was slain by Nebuchadnezzar at the reduction of Jerusalem, which occurred B.C. 587 years. Therefore he is termed "the son of Seraiah." He most probably was the grandson, or great-grandson. This we think is made evident by Dr. Prideaux, in one of his chronological arguments, in which he shows that if Ezra had been only one year old at the death of Seraiah, he must have been 132 when he was appointed by the Persian king to the government of Jerusalem. And it is certain that he lived at least fifteen years after, for he was alive in the time of Nehemiah, and in possession of great vigour and physical strength, capable of reading publicly out of the law for hours together. Ezra is represented as a ready scribe, as well as a man of distinguished learning and piety. And he was especially skilled in the knowledge of the sacred writings and the history of his own nation.

Ezra left the city of Babylon for Jerusalem in the first day of the first month, called Nisan, or with us about the middle of March. On his way thither he halted on the banks of the River Abava, where he instituted a solemn fast; thence he went forward to Jerusalem, which he reached on the first day of the fifth month (with us about the middle of July). He was therefore about four months performing this journey.

As soon as he arrived he delivered into the temple the presents of the Persian king, his nobles, and those of the people of Israel who still remained in Babylon. These presents consisted of one hundred talents of gold, twenty basins of gold, worth about one thousand drachms, and two of copper, and six hundred talents of silver; with vessels of silver of the weight of one hundred talents more; which, according to the computation of Dr. A. Clarke, amounted to £1,038,600 sterling.

Ezra having stated the nature of his commission to the king's lieutenants and governor of Syria and Palestine, he intimated that he was empowered to settle both the Church and State affairs of the Jews concerning the law of Moses (Ezra vii. 25, 26), and to appoint magistrates and judges to administer justice to the disobedient by imprisonment and confiscation, or by banishment and death, according to the demerit of their crimes. Ezra faithfully discharged his duty, and discreetly exercised his authority for the space of fourteen years, viz., until the arrival of Nehemiah, who was commissioned by the king of Persia to take his place.

When Ezra arrived in Jerusalem, notwithstanding the pious labours of a few devout men, he found almost every class of people had apostatised into idolatrous connection by marrying with other nations, contrary to the law of Moses. At this he was so grieved that he rent his clothes and plucked off his hair, and sat down to mourn in astonishment. He was so confounded and distressed in his soul that he scarcely knew what to do or how to act. After the time of the evening sacrifice

he arose from his heaviness, and again rent his garments—fell on his knees and spread forth his hands before the Lord God and said, “O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God; for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is gone up to the heavens. Since the days of our fathers have we been in a great trespass unto this day; and for our iniquities have we, our kings, and our priests been delivered into the hands of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to a spoil, and to confusion of face, as it is this day.”

Under this prayer, offered up by Ezra, the people were much affected: “And there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children; for the people wept very sore.” They were convinced of the evil which they had done, and many of them were very deeply and truly penitent, and resolved to do what Ezra commanded them. He therefore felt encouraged, and proceeded with the work of religious reformation, which he accomplished with great success. Josephus says Ezra died and was buried in Jerusalem, in the one hundred and twentieth year of his age. But according to other traditions, which are more generally received among the Jews, he died in Persia, and was buried on the banks of the river Samura, where Benjamin Tudela states that his tomb is shown in the city of Zamuza.

Ezra was a man most distinguished for his deep piety, great learning, and remarkable industry. He was a great scribe as well as a holy priest. The Book of Ezra

was undoubtedly his own composition, and it contains records of great value, inasmuch as it is a continuation of Jewish history from the period at which the Chronicles came to a close. The connection of the two histories is evident to every attentive reader, from the way in which he commences his records, the two first verses being a repetition of the concluding part of the Chronicles, word for word. But the writing of this important piece of history formed but a very small portion of his labours as a scribe ; for to Ezra both Jews and Christians uniformly attribute the great work and distinguished honour of collecting, arranging, and publishing the inspired writings which constitute the sacred code, or the Bible.

We may also remark that some suppose Ezra to have composed the greater portion, if not the whole, of the two books of Chronicles, and the Book of Esther, and that “these, together with those of Nehemiah and Malachi, were not classed with the sacred writings until the suspension of the prophetic spirit, when the books of sacred scripture were finally closed by Simon the Just and the great synagogue.” And many of the ancient fathers attribute to him more than this, for they hold that “all the Scriptures were lost or destroyed in the Babylonish captivity, and that Ezra restored them again.” This opinion was held by Irenæus, Tertullian, Clemens Alexandrinus, Basil, and others, but Dr. Prideaux says, “this opinion has no other foundation for it than the fabulous relation which we have of it in the fourteenth of the second apochryphal book of Esdras, too absurd even for the Romanists themselves to receive

into their canons." What Ezra did, in reference to the sacred writings, according to the best and most reliable authorities we have been able to consult, was to collect as many copies as he could, and out of them collate and write out a complete and correct edition in the Chaldean characters, the pure Hebrew language having then ceased to be spoken as a living language by the commonalty. This was not only a work of great labour but required an extensive knowledge of profane and sacred literature, sound judgment, and unwavering integrity, and on some occasions supernatural aid, all of which this great and good man seemed to possess.

Ezra was particularly careful to correct all errors which had occurred through the negligence or mistakes of transcribers; and being a man of extraordinary penetration and spiritual enlightenment he would be able, by comparing them one with another, to find out the true reading and rectify what appeared to his judgment erroneous. Some Jewish authors say that the *Keri Cetib*, or various readings in the Hebrew Bibles, were the corrections of Ezra. But this is very questionable, as there are *Keri Cetib* in his own writings. And it is not likely he would thus correct his own errors by annexing the *Keri* or true reading in the margin, and leaving the *Cetib*, or questionable reading, in the text. It is more reasonable to conclude that he disposed of the proper order, corrected the text and reading of the sacred books, and settled the canon of Scripture for his time.

It is also supposed, and we think with good reason, that Ezra, in his edition of the Holy Scriptures, added

in several places throughout the books certain notes, in order to correct and complete the several books, and make them readable in his time. In this important work he would no doubt be especially assisted by the same Divine Spirit under whose guidance they were originally written. That there are many such appendix and interpolations cannot reasonably be disputed. But these additions do not in the least invalidate the authenticity of the sacred records, but rather confirm them ; because they were inserted, as we have presumed, by the direction of the same infallible Spirit that dictated all the rest ; not to alter the original sense, but to make it more complete and easier to be understood, by giving a correct and complete finish to historical narratives which could not be recorded by the same inspired authors at the time they took place. As in the case of the death and burial of Moses, these particulars could not be written by Moses, who was the penman of the other parts of the Pentateuch. The last chapter of Deuteronomy must have been written by some other person.

No man was more likely to be divinely inspired to make all necessary additions to the Holy Scriptures than Ezra. He was raised up by God to write the last inspired records, and we doubt not that he was called also to correct and arrange the whole. We may also add, that after the arrival of Nehemiah in Jerusalem Ezra assisted him in the work of religious reform in relation to the law of marriages ; the Sabbath and the Sabbatical year ; the paying of tributes to the temple ; and tithes and firstfruits for the maintenance of the

priests and Levites; also, in erecting synagogues in every place where there were ten persons of full age and free condition, so that they could attend divine service, where the law was read and expounded, and prayers and thanksgivings offered up in the form of liturgies, and other divers ceremonies. Moreover, some learned biblical scholars have assigned to Ezra the work of inventing the Hebrew vowel points, in order to determine the definite meaning of the sacred text; others, however, have strongly argued and concluded this could not be the case, but that they were invented by the Masoites, or by the celebrated school at Tiberias, and that, so far from these points being of divine authority, they are “a set of arbitrary marks called vowel points, and are a confused and inconsistent mass of rules for their own use in grammar.” This is a critical subject for the learned to investigate, but with which we are not called to meddle.

Those who wish to acquaint themselves with what can be said on both sides of the question may consult the elaborate arguments of Elias Levita, a German Jew; answers to these arguments, by Messrs. Buxtorff, father and son (for both replied to the former); the investigations of Dr. Prideaux, and the remarks of Dr. J. Andrew, in his “Introduction to the Study of the Hebrew Language,” and they will there find, in substance, perhaps, all that can with propriety be said on this dubious subject. But leaving out this labour of inventing the vowel points, Ezra did a great work, and both Jews and Christians are laid under lasting obliga-

tion to him for the service he has rendered, in order to secure a correct understanding of the sacred Scriptures, especially in an historical and canonical point of view. After his governmentship had expired, being superseded by the appointment of Nehemiah, he still laboured in Jerusalem as a preacher of righteousness and a skilful scribe and expounder of the law of God, as long as he lived, and thereby rendered great assistance to his successor in the government of the city and province.

In the 20th year of the reign of Artaxerxes, being 445 before Christ, that most worthy and excellent person, Nehemiah, was commissioned by the Persian king to the government of Judea and Jerusalem. We find that, by his commission, he was invested with full authority to rebuild the walls of the holy city, and to erect such fortifications as formed its defence before it was dismantled and destroyed by the Babylonians. But before proceeding to describe his operations in this great undertaking, it may be necessary to offer a few remarks relative to his early history. Nehemiah, although born in Babylon, whence he removed into Persia, and became the cup-bearer of the Persian king, was of Jewish origin, and his ancestors had formerly been citizens of the Hebrew capital, which he designates "the place of his fathers' sepulchres." Neh. xi. 3. Of the tribe and family to which he belonged we have no reliable information, only that his father's name was Hachaliah.

We must not confound this Nehemiah with a person of the same name mentioned by Ezra as having re-

turned with Zerubbabel from the Babylonish captivity, in Ch. xi. 2, for ninety-two years had intervened between that period and the time of Nehemiah's commission to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, and consequently, if Nehemiah, the governor of Jerusalem, was the same person of that name who came out of captivity with Zerubbabel, he must have been about one hundred years old when appointed to the office of governor. At such an advanced age he would not have been able to perform those great exertions and duties which are ascribed to him during the twelve years of his governorship. The probability is that he remained with his father in the land of captivity, and settled in the city of Shushan, in which place he was advanced to honour in the Persian court. Being thus privileged he would often be in the presence of the king, and being a man of admirable qualities, and most probably belonging to a distinguished family of wealth and honour, he eventually became a favourite with his royal master. But while in the midst of royalty and splendour, and having at his own command immense wealth to sustain an expensive establishment, he had not forgotten the country and religion of his forefathers; although born, brought up, and settled in a distant country he had regard for the religion of his ancestors, and the prosperity and restoration of the returned captives. And being informed of the defenceless state of the city and the pitiable condition of the people, notwithstanding all the exertions of pious Ezra, he was moved with compassion, and applied himself to fasting and prayer to God on their behalf. And having thus implored the divine mercy and blessing, he resolved to

lay the case before the king at the first opportunity. The next time he came into the presence of the king in the regular discharge of his office it was with a sad and dejected countenance, which the king observed, and inquired as to the cause of it; whereupon he explained to him the distressed state of his country, assigned this as the cause of his grief, and prayed that he might be sent to remedy the evils. His request was granted; and a royal decree was issued for him to rebuild the walls and gates of Jerusalem. Without delay he prepared for the undertaking, and set off with a troop of horse guards, under the command of some of the chief captains of the Persian army, to conduct him safely to the seat of government. The king also wrote letters to the government of his provinces beyond the Euphrates, commanding them to assist Nehemiah in the work he was commissioned to perform; and a letter was sent to Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, that he might give him timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertaineth to the house, and for the walls of the city, and for the house intended for his residence.

This favour shown by the king of Persia towards the Jews, in the appointment of Nehemiah to restore Jerusalem, stirred up the jealousy and prejudices of the Samaritan governors, Sanballat and Tobiah: "It grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel." Neh. ii. 10.

Nehemiah having safely arrived in Jerusalem, and made known his commission to some of the inhabitants, he rose in the night to reconnoitre the city and examine the state of its walls. This nocturnal survey was made

by Nehemiah, unknown to the rulers and nobles of the city. Neither did he inform any, save a few persons he took with him as guides and protectors from personal danger and harm. We may suppose he deemed it the most prudent to go secretly, that he might be the less interrupted in his examinations, and that his enemies might not be stirred up to defeat his measures. After thus making himself fully acquainted with the real condition of the city, he revealed his commission and purpose: "Now ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire; come, let us build up the walls of Jerusalem, that we may be no more a reproach." And in order to secure their co-operation he assured them that God was with him, and he had also the patronage and support of the Persian king. After hearing his statement they took encouragement and said, "let us rise up and build;" so they strengthened each other's hands in the good work.

But they had no sooner commenced operations than they met with opposition from the Samaritan governors, who also enlisted into their service Geshem the Arabian, most likely some chief of the Arab tribe who resided contiguous to Samaria. These Samaritans and Arabs affected to deride the Jews who had united with Nehemiah, and tried to intimidate them by intimating that they regarded them as enemies to the Persian king. They might also think that by so speaking they should be regarded as more loyal than the Jews, and by that means raise jealousy in the king's mind, and induce him

to command a suspension of the work. This was not the first nor the last time the Samaritans thus acted. By making a false representation to the king at the time the temple was being rebuilt the work was stopped, until the reign of Darius, as mentioned in Ezra, c. iv. But Nehemiah returned them the same answer as did Zerubbabel: "The Lord God of heaven he will prosper us, therefore we his servants will arise and build; but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem."

We may here just notice, very briefly, that the Samaritans, the Arabians, the Amorites, and sometimes the Ashdodites, continued to oppose Nehemiah in his work, and on one occasion they came up unitedly in open war against him, when the Jews betook themselves to fervent prayer and self-defence. While they prepared themselves with swords and spears and bows, with which to defend themselves and the walls of the city, if attacked by the enemy, their trust was in God. For Nehemiah said to the rulers and the rest of the people, "Be ye not afraid of them, remember the Lord, who is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your houses." And the Jews, who adhered to their heroic leader, were so zealous and resolute in this undertaking that they worked day and night, incessantly; for none of them put off their clothes, save that every man put them off for washing. Neh. iv. 23. And while the people thus laboured with a willing heart, Nehemiah acted a most generous part in providing many of them with food out of his own substance.

When the enemies of Nehemiah saw that the walls of the city were nearly finished, and they had no hopes of hostile measures prevailing against him, they had recourse to trickery. They insidiously desired to confer with Nehemiah in one of their villages in the plain of Ono, designing there to do him mischief. Ono was situated in the tribe of Benjamin, near the Jordan; most likely some obscure place, convenient for their contemplated mischief. To this request Nehemiah abruptly replied, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?" They were so intent on mischief that they repeated their application four times, and Nehemiah uniformly answered them in a similar manner. He who was too valiant and heroic to be stopped by violence, was also too wise to be caught by treachery and hypocrisy. Nehemiah evidently saw into their vile motives and malicious designs, and therefore answered them accordingly.

They then sent to him a fifth time, and with the messenger an open letter, in which they charged him with the design of rebellion and planning to make himself king. This was not only groundless, but the manner in which it was done was insulting to a man of such dignified principles and noble qualities as was Nehemiah. Again he answered them very discreetly, but with a boldness which became the dignity of his high and responsible position: "There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart." This valiant and pious man con-

tinued to prosecute, with unabated diligence, in the midst of much opposition, the work assigned to him, until his mission by the Persian monarch was consummated.

Dr. Prideaux makes it out that during the restoration of Jerusalem under the superintendency of Nehemiah, he paid a visit to the Persian Court; but Dr. A. Clarke says he went to Babylon and stayed one year; whilst Kitto thinks he was away eight years. It appears from ch. xiii. 6, that he did leave Jerusalem for a time, for some purpose or another; but whether he went to Babylon or Shushan the sacred text does not say explicitly; we cannot therefore safely determine. Neither is the time of his absence stated. The passage reads thus, "But in all this time was not I at Jerusalem: for in the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes, king of Babylon, came I unto the king, and after *certain days* obtained I leave of the king, and I came to Jerusalem."

Artaxerxes being designated king of Babylon does not necessarily imply he was residing in Babylon when visited by Nehemiah. It is well known that his imperial seat and court was at Shushan, the capital of his empire, where he generally resided, and during the summer he usually went to his royal residence at Ecbatana. Dr. Lempriere says, "this was the usual custom of the king of Persia." And why he should in the text be designated "the king of Babylon" rather than the king of Persia, we cannot say. We are not furnished with any account of the last days of Nehe-

miah, but it is generally believed that he lived to an advanced age, that he was the last Governor appointed by the Persian monarch, and that after his death the superintendency of the city was left with the Jewish high priests, until Alexander the Great invaded the Persian dominions, and overthrew their monarchy.





CHAPTER IV.

The last inspired Prophets : and what followed.



The last inspired prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi—The blank period—Profane history not to be relied on—The account of Josephus respecting John and Jesus, sons of the high priest—The conduct of Bagoses, the governor of Syria—The supposed state and condition of the Jews during the historic vacancy—The Jews involved in an Egyptian war—Ochus inflicts punishment on the Jews.



AFTER the return of the Jews from their captivity, Haggai and Zechariah were raised up and inspired to instruct, warn, and reprove the people. As the commonalty of the people had not an opportunity of reading “Moses and the prophets” for themselves, the sacred canon not having as yet been completed, and as there were but few if any correct copies in existence, it seemed necessary that they should have suitable living instructors to guide them until Ezra had accomplished the work assigned to him by providence, after which there appeared to be no more need of such officers. And from this time revelations under the Old Testament dispensation ceased. As to

whether Malachi delivered his prophecies before or after the time of Ezra, is a disputed question which cannot be satisfactorily decided, and to dogmatise on this subject would be presumptuous. Some men of distinguished biblical learning say "his writings bear evident marks of a previous date," and think they have reasonable grounds to believe he delivered his predictions before, or about the time of, Jeremiah. Others, however, think differently, and affirm that after the death of Nehemiah the Jewish Church, the priesthood, and the people generally fell into grievous evils, which are referred to in Malachi's writings, and that he was raised up by God, as the final warning voice, to reprove them for their apostacy, and to predict the coming of Messiah under the magnificent image of the "Sun of Righteousness" arising with "healing in his wings." Till this period they were directed to keep the law of Moses with its corresponding ceremonial services, which would still be adapted to the obscure period of the prefigurative dispensation, up to the era of the breaking forth of the evangelical morning upon the long-benighted world.

Elijah is also named as the precursor of the new economy, whose office it would be to reform the principles and enlighten the minds of the people, and thus avert the impending and merited judgments of the Almighty. Under the name of this ancient and self-denying prophet was couched that wonderful and highly-honoured personage, John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ. While this is the opinion generally received,

some think the prophetic spirit was not absolutely withdrawn, nor the canon of the Old Testament completed until the time of Simon the Just; and others, such, for example, as Papists and Puseyites, believe in the divine authority of the apocryphal books. On such opinions and subjects much might be said which cannot, with propriety, be interwoven in this historical sketch, designed to impart useful information to ordinary readers.

Viewing the subject historically, we may venture to say that inspiration was suspended from about the time of Nehemiah's death until the end of the reign of Herod the Great, when the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, and communicated to him the important fact respecting the generation of the Saviour; or, according to the gospel recorded by St. Luke, when the angel appeared to Zacharias, while he was standing by the altar of incense, to inform him that his prayer was answered and that his wife Elizabeth should bear a son, whose name should be called John.

We have, therefore, now come to the close of inspired history. The day of divine revelation, for a time, is past, and the last lingering rays of heavenly light, like those which tinge the upper regions of our natural horizon when the sun has disappeared from our sight, have vanished from the moral heavens. A long night is before us, and sometimes there is scarcely a ray of light either from moon or stars, which makes us long for the day when the bright and morning star will appear and expel the darkness cast over all nations,

While we could appeal to inspired truth to guide us in our statements we felt safe and secure amidst the clashes of human opinions, and the conflicting statements of erring men. But from the time of Nehemiah to the coming of Christ the stream of inspiration ceased to flow, and the heavenly vision was closed. Not an additional whisper was heard on earth from the God of heaven to guide bewildered man in the way he ought to go. Enough had been said and written by "Moses and the prophets," and God seemed to leave both Jews and Gentiles more to themselves.

During this dark period there were undoubtedly some individuals who were specially guided by divine influences, but the Almighty ceased to reveal himself and instruct the people as he had been wont to do in former ages. Therefore, in attempting to record the history of God's ancient people simply by the light of profane history, and the dubious and contradictory statements of erring men, it requires the greatest caution and discriminating prudence. While we could appeal to the inspired records, in matters of dispute, we felt ourselves safe and justifiable in adopting the sacred text, but we have no such confidence in any profane historian, however we may respect his ability and fidelity. That heathen authors were but little acquainted with the history of the Jews is evident, and this is not a matter of surprise when we consider that Jews and Gentiles kept themselves separate from each other. It was long before the Hebrews came in contact with the classic nations of Greece and Rome; and when they became

acquainted there was such a diversity of manners, religion, literature, and mode of government, that a natural principle of repulsion existed between the Jews and all other people, especially in the grand consolidating principles and practices of religion. We could enumerate many instances in confirmation of this statement were it necessary.

It is said that Trogus Pompeius, a Latin historian, who flourished in the reign of Augustus, was the best acquainted with the Jews of any heathen author. His works, which are now lost to the world, consisted of forty-four (some say forty-five) books. These writings were epitomized by *Justinus*, and this epitome is still extant, and is regarded by the learned as "*An elegant Abridgment.*" That the reader may judge of the views entertained by these learned heathens in relation to the Jews, we make the following quotation from Justin's "Elegant Abridgment," translated by Dr. Esdaile:—"The Jews were originally from Damascus, the capital of Syria, which had its name from king Damascus, whose wife the Syrians revered as a goddess. After Damascus came Azelus, Adores, Abraham, and Israel. Israel had ten sons, amongst whom he divided the country into ten kingdoms, and gave them the name of Jews in honour of his son Judah, who died after the division, and whose portion was divided among the rest. Joseph was the youngest of his brothers, and his brothers being afraid of his superior talent sold him to foreign merchants, by whom he was brought into Egypt, and there in a short time he became a favourite with

the king, on account of his skill in magic. So great was his knowledge and experience that his words were regarded as oracular. *Moses was his son*, who, in addition to his father's knowledge, was distinguished for personal beauty. But the Egyptians being smitten with boils, and with the itch, lest the malady should spread, expelled Moses along with the infected from the country. Having become the leader of the exiles, he carried off by stealth the sacred utensils and mysterious symbols of the Egyptians, which they endeavoured to recover, but were driven back by a tempest."

We have recorded the above to show the reader that we cannot safely quote from ancient classical authors any matters pertaining to the Jewish nation, whether they be philosophers, historians, or poets; for Horace, Juvenal, Tacitus, Suetonius, and all the rest of these distinguished heathen authors, who have written on the subject, have given the most distorted, prejudiced, and hostile views of their institutions, character, and manners: therefore nothing will be taken from their works without careful examination and comparison. From the time of Nehemiah to the reign of Alexander the Great there is an historic vacancy which is not filled up even by Josephus. All that the Jewish historian relates as having taken place for upwards of 150 years is one circumstance, an instance of the dreadful consequences of anger, and the punishment of ambition (*Antq. b. xi. ch. vii.*), the substance of which may be thus recorded.—The high priest had two sons, John and Jesus. John, on the decease of his father,

took the office of high priest ; but Jesus, his brother, being in honour and highly esteemed by Bagoses, the governor of Syria under the Persian king, was promised the pontifical office by Bagoses. On the ground or strength of this promise he went to Jerusalem, backed by the authority of the Persian satrap. The two brothers met in the inner court of the temple ; John resolutely maintained his legitimate right to retain office, which the intruder demanded for himself. In that holy place the brothers quarelled ; and Jesus was killed on the consecrated spot. Bagoses, hearing of this sanguinary deed, hastened to Jerusalem to investigate the horrid transaction. He, on being reproved for entering the holy place, upbraided the Jews in the severest language for transforming the temple of God into a slaughter-house. "What," said he, "is my living body not more pure than the dead carcass of him ye have slain in the temple?" Whereupon he forced his way into the sacred edifice, and, after looking on the spot where the blood of his friend had been spilt, he imposed a heavy fine upon the temple, which remained for seven years. This tragical circumstance is all that is recorded concerning the Jews for the space of 150 years.

All attempts to fill up this historical blank have proved unsuccessful. Ancient historians had other objects in view than keeping together a chain of Hebrew annals ; and modern historians cannot supply this lack by the force of imagination. Even Persian history, from which we might have expected to find some fragments, at least, respecting the Jews during

this period, is almost silent. We may, therefore, safely conclude that nothing of great importance occurred. When a nation is quiet and peaceable, not disturbed by war or innovations, when trade and commerce, husbandry, politics, and religion, all remain uninterrupted by distress, strife, or dissensions, there is nothing remarkable to be publicly recorded. We may, therefore, infer that during this period of silence respecting the Jews they were undisturbed, living in harmony, and enjoying the blessings of providence. Had they been engaged in war, or had undergone any political change, or had there been any novel mode of worship introduced, any divisions in their ecclesiastical establishment, or had they been visited with any severe judgments for their sins, such circumstances and occurrences, no doubt, would have been recorded, either in the annals of Persia, or in some general ancient history. This is all we can safely or prudently say on this subject.

A short time before the nations of the east were invaded by the Macedonian and Grecian armies, under the command of Alexander the Great, the Jews got involved in a war with the Egyptians, against Ochus, which seemed to place them on the brink of ruin. This is not mentioned by Josephus, but Solinus, in his historical collection, and Syncellus, the Byzantine historian, both refer to it; and so does Orosius in his universal history, as well as Eusebius in his *Chronicon*, and several other ancient authors. The facts of the case stand as follow:—In the reign of Ochus, king of Persia, the Sidonians and some of the Phœnicians

rebelled against the oppression of the Persian governor. With this rebellion the Jews appear to have been in some way concerned, though the particulars are not stated, for after Ochus had reduced Sidon to ashes, and disposed of its ruins for a large sum of money, he recruited his army and marched into Judea, where he laid siege to the city of Jericho, and took it without much resistance. A great number of the Jews were carried away as captives. Some were taken in the train of the conqueror when he marched into Egypt, and others were sent into Hyrcania, and planted those provinces which lay on the shores of the Caspian sea.

To what other extent Ochus inflicted punishment upon the Jews, for uniting in rebellion with the insurgents, history is silent. Most likely, by the intervention of providence, they were protected and preserved from further inflictions. They had long been the objects of divine regard, and wonderfully taken care of amidst the various revolutions to which their sins and apostacy had subjected them; and the special design for which they were constituted a distinct and highly favoured people was not yet accomplished. The preservation of the Jews, and their religion and polity, was essential to the development of the grand design of the Almighty until Messiah made his appearance; consequently, they might even then be regarded as God's peculiar people and under his special superintendency and protection. Whether in bondage at Babylon, or under the government of the Persians, the Greco-Macedonians, or the

Romans, the divine sceptre never departed from Judah until Shiloh came. In the next section of history which claims our attention, these statements will, in some measure, be verified.





CHAPTER V.

The Greco-Macedonian Conquest.

Alexander the Great—His birth and early life—Chosen Commander of the Grecian forces—He declares war against Persia—His success in his first expedition—His military regulations resemble those of the Jews—Takes Syria—His taking of Tyre—The Jews refuse to assist him—Marches to Jerusalem—Meets with the High Priest outside the city—Adores the God of Israel—Spare the city—Shows great favour to the Jews—Refuses to confer the same favours on the Samaritans—Takes the city of Gaza on his way into Egypt—The Egyptians submit to him—He invades Scythia and several Indian provinces—His character and conduct as a warrior.



HE history of the Jews from B.C. 350 is more particularly mixed up with the annals of Greece and the operations of Alexander the Great and his successors, until the conquests of the Romans. Alexander III., surnamed the Great, son of Philip, king of Macedonia, was born B.C. 355. His mother's name was Olympias. Passing over several fabulous statements which were supposed to prognosticate his future greatness, we may just mention that in early life he was placed under the tuition of the famous Aristotle, with whom he remained five years.

At the age of fifteen years, his father being absent on a war expedition, Alexander governed Macedonia, when he gave evidence of his superior ability in quelling a dangerous sedition. Soon afterwards he followed his father in the field of battle, where he gave further displays of his extraordinary ability and heroism. He was about nineteen years of age at the death of his father, when he immediately entered on his first military expedition, and having conquered Thrace and Illyricum, and destroyed Thebes, he was chosen the chief commander of all the forces of Greece. He then declared war against the Persians, under the pretext that Darius and Xerxes had laid waste and plundered the Grecian cities. And ere he had finished his short and bloody career, he produced those mighty and important revolutions which disrupted empires, demolished thrones, changed the physical and political aspect of nations, and gave a new impulse to the destinies of the kingdoms of the world.

It is generally believed that Alexander was the unconscious instrument, and perhaps in some instances the intelligent agent, of fulfilling divine prophecies, and accomplishing the corrective and inflictive purposes of the Almighty. When he was about twenty years of age he collected an army, which consisted of 32,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry, and with this comparatively small force he invaded Asia, with scarcely sufficient money or stuff to support his army for one month (amounting in value to about £14,437). After a few days' march he encountered the Persian army at the river Granicus, and gained a great victory over them,

though their army consisted of five times the number of the Macedonians. With this victory he gained the immense treasures of Darius, then at Sardis, and all the provinces of Lower Asia. Many of the Grecian cities immediately declared for him, and those which did not do so were speedily subdued.

He then retired into winter quarters, and allowed those of his soldiers who were married to return to Macedonia and spend the winter with their wives, but arranged for their return the next spring. It is worthy of notice that this regulation is somewhat similar to that prescribed by Moses in Deut. xxiv. 5, which has led some to suppose that Aristotle had learned that this was a Jewish custom, and approving of it as an equitable usage and a wise political arrangement, recommended its adoption to Alexander in reference to his army.

The next year, after fighting the great battle at Issus, in which were slain 100,000 Persians, he added all Syria to his former acquisitions, and possessed himself of the immense treasures which Darius was obliged to leave at Damascus. He then came to the rich commercial city of Tyre, which then stood on an island, at a distance of about half a mile from the shore; it was fortified with strong walls, which were 150 feet in height and based upon the brink of the surrounding sea. In addition to this double security, the Carthaginians, who were then masters of the sea, engaged with the Tyrians to send them succour and support during the siege. These things caused Alexander to pause and deliberate as to the best method of taking the city. The Tyrians

were desirous of coming to terms of peace with Alexander, but not willing to submit to him as a conqueror. They therefore sent ambassadors to meet him with suitable presents and provision for his army, but at the same time denied him admittance into the city. But Alexander's object was subjugation not reconciliation ; he therefore resolved to force submission by a siege. The Tyrians, relying on their isolated position, strong fortifications, and the assistance which they expected to receive from their allies, resolved to withstand such forces as the invader could bring against them, feeling assured that the city could not possibly be taken by assault. And Alexander also being aware of this, had recourse to other measures preparatory to making an assault. He conceived an idea of forming a terreous passage across that part of the sea which intervened between the shore and the island on which was situated the city, as above described. Old Tyre, which formerly stood on the shore just opposite New Tyre, then lay in ruins ; this he determined to totally demolish, and with the stones and rubbish of the city, mixed up with a portion of earth, to carry a bank or causeway from the continent through the strait to the island, and by this means make a way for an assault. He succeeded in accomplishing this great work in seven months, when he stormed and took the city. That causeway still remains, with the addition of accumulated matter worked up by the motion of the sea ; hence the ruins of Tyre and the site on which that once splendid city stood appear on modern maps as a peninsula, stand-

ing out from the site of Old Tyre, in the Mediterranean.

According to Josephus, Alexander, while he lay before Tyre, fell short of provisions for his army, and applied to the high priest at Jerusalem to send him such supplies as he formerly sent Darius, promising the high priest, if he did so, he should have no occasion to repent of it. On which the holy pontiff told the messengers that he had given his oath to Darius, and therefore could not transgress so long as he lived. At this answer Alexander was so enraged that he threatened the high priest with a speedy visit, and that he would "through him teach all men to whom they must keep their oaths." The same historian says, "After Alexander left Tyre he came to the city of Gaza and besieged it." . . . "And when he had taken Gaza he hastened to Jerusalem." But Prideaux thinks the Jewish historian has here fallen into a mistake, on which he (Prideaux) remarks, "For Jerusalem lying in the way from Tyre to Gaza, it is by no means likely that Alexander should from Tyre go direct to Gaza, pass by Jerusalem, and afterwards return three or four days' march with all his army to that city; or that he should at all think it safe to begin the siege of Gaza when such a city as Jerusalem was left untaken behind him."

We may also add that historians generally who have written on the expeditions of Alexander say that on his leaving Gaza he went directly into Egypt. And it certainly seems but reasonable, all things considered, to conclude that as soon as he had accomplished his object on Tyre he would march directly against Jerusalem,

with an intention to punish the Jews as severely as he had done the Tyrians—the latter having refused him admission into their city and the former having refused to send him supplies in time of want. He had moreover threatened to punish Jerusalem when he had finished his work at Tyre, and we think, according to his promise, he went to Jerusalem with an intention to take the city and punish the inhabitants.

There seems to be no disagreement in reference to what took place on the approach of Alexander to the city. The generality of those who have written on this subject have admitted the story of Josephus as being correct, which is a proof that the Jews were still protected by a special providence, and the holy city was again, as in the days of Hezekiah, shielded from a victorious and destroying army by the arm of the Almighty. When Jaddua, the high priest, received the threatening message from Alexander he exhorted the people to cast themselves upon the care and implore the protection of the Almighty; and Jaddua received divine direction in a dream to meet the conqueror without the walls of the city, arrayed in his pontifical robes, attended with a retinue of priests in the formalities of their order, with the people in white garments. On the approach of the Macedonian army the high priest, in obedience to the revelation he had received from heaven, went out to meet them on an eminence at a short distance from the city. Alexander was urging his soldiers on to the assault, and the Samaritans and the Syrian princes, who attended him, were eagerly long-

ing to glut their malignity with the destruction of the city and the blood of its inhabitants.

The Sacerdotal procession advanced in majestic order to meet the army of veterans, whose courage and skill had been demonstrated in deeds of prodigious valour. At length the high priest of Jehovah, and the greatest military hero on earth came within speaking distance, and calmly confronted each other. But Alexander, who had been elevated, by his flatterers, even to the rank and honour of a god, was so struck with awe, on approaching the high priest, that he bowed before him, and saluted in the most reverential manner at the feet of the venerable pontiff, to adore the mysterious name engraven on the frontal ornament which he bore upon his brow. At this devotional conduct, the attendants on the Macedonian Monarch stood astonished. Parmenio, one of Alexander's chief generals, who enjoyed his confidence, inquired the reason of this extraordinary conduct, and what induced him to pay such adoration to the high priest. To which Alexander replied,—“I do not adore the priest, but that God, whose servant he is;” and as to the reason of his thus adoring the God of Israel, he further adds, “When I was at Dio in Macedonia deliberating upon my Persian expedition, and hesitating whether to undertake it, this person in the very habit appeared to me in a dream, and encouraged me to execute the project, and promised that God would guide me in my expedition, and bestow upon me the empire of Persia.”

Alexander kindly embraced the Pontiff, at which the

Jews greatly rejoiced, and both companies unitedly marched peaceably into Jerusalem, and offered sacrifice to God in the temple. The high priest embraced this favourable opportunity of acquainting Alexander that the prophet Daniel had predicted the overthrow of the Persian empire by a Grecian king, from which Alexander took encouragement to prosecute his war with Darius, believing himself to be the person thus described by the Hebrew prophet.

These circumstances, as we might reasonably suppose, strongly recommended the Jews to the special favour of Alexander, whose unbounded ambition prompted him to eagerly aspire to universal dominion. He was so highly gratified with what had taken place that he determined to confer upon the Jews some special favour as a token of his approbation. And when they requested the freedom of their country, the administration of their laws, the enjoyment of their religious privileges, and their exemption from tribute on the Sabbatical year, he readily complied with their request, and these privileges he also extended to the Jews in Babylon and Media. After he departed from Judea he evinced his continued kindness to the Jews. He settled a very considerable number of them in the city of Alexandria, bestowed on them many privileges and immunities, and admitted them to the same franchises and liberties with his own Macedonian subjects. And as long as he lived he kept good faith with the Jews, for after the close of his military career, when he retired to the city of Babylon, when the Jewish soldiers refused, on religious prin-

ciples to work at the restoration of the heathen temple, which Alexander vainly attempted, he graciously relieved them, and also generously granted them a general discharge out of the army.

The above particulars have been regarded by some historians as a pure invention, merely to account for the favours shown by Alexander to the Jews; but the genuineness of the narrative has been generally acknowledged, and we cannot entertain any reasonable doubt on the subject, but believe the events really occurred as they are stated, and we regard the whole as a manifestation of God's special providence in the preservation of his people.

One writer who objects to receive this account as a true historical narrative, assigns as a reason,—“If the high priest knew that Alexander was ordained by God, and predicted by his holy prophet as the great prince who should overthrow the Persian empire, it was inconsistent in him to refuse allegiance to the person thus divinely appointed.” In reply to this, we may remark first,—If the high priest knew that it was predicted that a Grecian prince should overthrow the Persian empire, he might not know at the time he refused Alexander assistance that he was the identical person referred to in the prediction. Secondly, that prophecy is no rule of duty. The high priest knew that to be true to his oath, which he had made to the Persian king, was his duty, and that nothing but the complete conquest of Palestine would involve the transfer of his allegiance to the predicted conqueror. He therefore conscientiously

refused assistance to Alexander, and when instructed in a vision what he ought to do on the conqueror approaching the city, he as conscientiously declined to resist him. And as to the possibility of Alexander receiving such a communication in a dream or vision, as he stated, in consequence of which he changed his purposes at the sight of the Jewish Pontiff, we cannot reasonably question it when we consider that the hearts of all men are in God's hands, and that he might see fit to adopt this method for the preservation of his people. Impious Pharoah had two extraordinarily significant dreams, which eventually led to the elevation of Joseph, and the preservation of Israel in Egypt. And Nebuchadnezzar had a dream which indicated the ruin of his great and wealthy empire, and the rise and fall of three successive monarchies : therefore, heathens and ungodly men have had visions from the Almighty.

This is a proper place to make a few observations relative to the Samaritans and the conduct of Alexander towards them. The Samaritans, who, for reasons before assigned, were unfriendly towards the Jews, envied the favours they had received from Alexander, and thought that they might reasonably expect the same indulgence; especially as they had assisted him in the siege of Tyre. They therefore met him on his departure from Jerusalem, and in imitation of the Jewish high priest, who had been so successful, they met him in a religious procession, and professed their relationship to the Hebrews, and therefore besought him to grant them similar favours to those conferred on their brethren. Alexander

did not absolutely refuse their request, but intimated that it would be more convenient to him to suspend his decision until he returned from Egypt. After Alexander had departed some of them became unsettled and raised a rebellion in the city, in which Andromachus, the governor, was slain. Alexander, being made acquainted with what had taken place, caused those who made the disturbance to be put to death, drove out the rest, and gave the city to a number of Macedonian settlers. Such of the Samaritans as escaped destruction retired to Shechem, near Mount Gerezim, which place subsequently became the capital of the Samaritan sect, and as such it continued. This change of inhabitants should be borne in mind when reference is made hereafter to the Samaritan city and the conduct of its inhabitants. The 8,000 Samaritans who assisted Alexander at the taking of Tyre, and continued to fight under his banner, he settled in Thebais, in a remote part of Egypt, lest their presence in Samaria should revive the mutinous spirit of their countrymen.

But we must now just notice that before Alexander left Palestine for Egypt he laid siege to the famous town of Gaza, which he found to be strongly fortified and well garrisoned, under the command of the valorous and faithful Betis, who defended the city to the utmost of his ability. The reason why Alexander was so intent on taking this city may easily be imagined. It was the inlet into Egypt, and only about three miles from the Mediterranean Sea. Its situation therefore constituted it a place of considerable importance. Notwithstanding

all the military skill and vigorous application of Alexander, and his powerful forces, the taking of Gaza required two months to reduce it. This seriously impeded his march into Egypt; and having received two wounds during the siege, he became so enraged that he indulged in the most consummate cruelties. He slew ten thousand of the men, and sold the rest, with their wives and children, into slavery. And when Betis, the brave commander, was brought before him, he ordered his heels to be bored and a cord drawn through them, and caused him thereby to be tied to a chariot and dragged round the city till he died. It is thought that he did this in imitation of Achilles, who, as Homer has it, thus dragged Hector round the walls of Troy. This conduct stands recorded on the pages of history as a mark of everlasting infamy on the character of the Macedonian hero. There was nothing either generous or noble in the manner in which he treated Betis and the inhabitants of Gaza after he took the city. Because of the delay which they had occasioned him, and the wounds which he had received, he indulged the worst passions and feelings of his nature—revenge, malice, and cruelty.

Alexander, having finished the siege of Gaza, and wreaked his bloodthirsty vengeance on its subdued population, left Palestine and marched with his mighty army into Egypt, where he met with a welcome reception. On his arrival at Pelusium, the Egyptians went out to meet him as their sovereign and make submission to him. They had been insulted and oppressed by the

Persians, and consequently were ready to receive the conqueror of their former tyrants and quietly submit to his sway. But as we have no design to follow Alexander in his rapid progress to the height of his martial glory, or to detail his numerous exploits and mighty conquests, we shall, after making a few brief observations, return to the history of the Jews. This brave and desperate warrior made himself master of Greece, Palestine, Egypt, Media, Syria, Persia, invaded Scythia, and subdued several of the Indian provinces. He always fought as if sure of victory, and the terror of his great name spread over all the old world. He was always foremost in every engagement, and bore the toil and danger of the field with the meanest of his soldiers. He destroyed and founded many cities. He did many brave and generous actions, and committed many awful crimes. He displayed on many occasions great skill, and on other occasions great folly. He was intemperate, and died at Babylon in a fit of drunkenness when only thirty-two years of age. After his death his kingdom was divided, and his family perished. He was great in military skill and power, and as great in crime and folly; hence his burning the Persian palace at the instigation of a drunken courtesan (Thais), and taking away the life of an eminent physician because he failed to keep alive one of his favourite guards, who had destroyed himself with intemperance. He had no fixed principles of religion, neither did he seem to regard any rule of morals, but acted as though he thought he was not responsible to any being superior

to himself. He vainly regarded himself as superhuman, and had the folly to order that he should be worshipped as a god, and when Callesthenes refused to do it he was shamefully put to death. Attempts have been made by Arrian and others to justify his conduct, and ignore his faults and folly, but all to no purpose. "Alexander the Great" stands on the pages of authenticated history as an everlasting monument of vain glory and unbounded ambition, sullied with infamy, and dyed with human blood. We hope the world will never see his like again.





CHAPTER VI.

The Division of the Alexandrian Empire.



The Alexandrian empire divided—Palestine falls to the lot of Laomedon of Mitylene—Ptolemy of Egypt sends Nicanor to invade the country of Laomedon—Ptolemy marches into Judea—The accounts of Agatharces Apudus and Josephus—Ptolemy takes Jerusalem and sends 100,000 Jews to Jerusalem—The condition of the Jews in Egypt—A number of Jews sent by Ptolemy to Cyrene and Libya—The condition of Judea under the Ptolemies of Egypt—The Jews found protection in Syria, Asia Minor, and Macedonia—Many of the Jews settle at Antioch, and various other places—Gain the favour of Antiochus.



AFTER the death of Alexander the Great much confusion prevailed in reference to the settlement of his state affairs, and the future government of his extensive dominions. At length his chief generals agreed to divide the various provinces of the newly-formed and unwieldy empire into several independent kingdoms in the three quarters of the globe. But these generals soon began to dispute with each other, and kept up a continual warfare until they were eventually reduced by the Romans, and incorpo-

rated in the Great Roman Monarchy. In these contests Judea suffered greatly, owing partly to its geographical position. Lying between Egypt and Syria, the kings of those countries were equally desirous to attach it to their respective dominion; it therefore became not only the prize of contest, but also the battle ground for victory. And these newly-made kings were such atrocious monsters that their actions were a pest and a curse to those whose unhappy lot it was to dwell within the arena of their strife. They are represented as being false, licentious, ambitious, perfidious, cruel, and sanguinary; trampling upon every moral obligation and every law, both human and divine, and unhesitatingly committing crimes which have stamped their names with immortal infamy. Some of their abominable transactions we shall be obliged to record in the course of this history, in order to bring out such facts, in reference to the Jews, which appear necessary to a general knowledge of their condition.

In the first division of the Greco-Macedonian empire, Palestine fell to the lot of Laomedon, one of Alexander's captains (as did also Syria and Phœnicia), but he was not long allowed to possess it uninterruptedly. Ptolemy, who had established himself in Egypt, seeing how conveniently Judea and Syria were situated for the defence of Egypt, and for other ambitious purposes, first coveted and then invaded Laomedon's territory. To give a plausible appearance to his conduct, Ptolemy made a sham attempt to purchase a portion of Laomedon's dominion, and because he refused to comply with his ambitious

request, Ptolemy dispatched one of his generals, Nicanor, with an army to invade the country. Laomedon, being taken by surprise, was soon vanquished and taken prisoner ; but the Jews, who had sworn allegiance to him, refused to submit to Ptolemy, their new master. This was, of course, a plausible pretext for him to march into Judea and lay siege to Jerusalem.

But the place being strongly fortified, and the inhabitants numerous, and also resolute on making a defence, he found it a difficult matter to take the city. But on the Sabbath day, when the Jews reverentially ceased to make any defence, considering it religiously wrong even to resist their enemies on the hallowed day, Ptolemy observing their religious scruples, took advantage of them, and stormed the city without any opposition. This is the account given by Agatharcides Apudus, a peripatetic, or Aristotelian philosopher and historian, who wrote B.C. 177. But Josephus relates that Ptolemy gained admission by means of making pretence that he wished to offer sacrifice in the temple. This does not seem very likely. The Jews were not so unacquainted with war tactics as to allow themselves to be taken by such a method as this. Prideaux charges Josephus with giving a false colouring to this transaction, lest he should expose his countrymen to the contempt of the Greeks for being so ridiculous and superstitious as not to defend their city on the Sabbath day. We think, however, that Prideaux has fallen into an error in coming to this conclusion, because it is evident that Josephus makes no attempt to conceal the fact that the

Jews ceased to fight on the Sabbath day, which he distinctly mentions in several places, and seems rather to glory in their conduct in so doing, which he would not have done if he wished to conceal it from the Greeks. Both statements may be partially true, without any particular design to “give a false colouring.” The Jews having ceased to fight on the Sabbath, and betaken themselves to divine worship, Ptolemy might think he would politically turn this to his own advantage, without continuing his military operations, by requesting the liberty of offering sacrifice in the temple, thinking by that means to quietly gain possession of the city; and on being refused, under the pretext of being wishful to offer his sacrifice, forced his way into the city on the Sabbath, and having once got within its walls refused to return. We do not give this as a fact, but as a probability, to reconcile, as far as possible, the discrepancy between the two historians.

When Ptolemy had made himself master of Jerusalem, and subjugated its inhabitants, he treated them with great severity, and sent 100,000 of them as captive slaves to Egypt to swell the population of Alexandria, where they were publicly sold to serve the Egyptians. But the steady and faithful conduct of these Jews gained them respect, and many of them were afterwards promoted by their conqueror to offices; so that in process of time several important garrisons both in Judea and Egypt were committed to their care; and they had granted them similar privileges to those bestowed upon them by Alexander.

Ptolemy having gained possession of Cyrene and Libya, he placed a number of trustworthy Jews in those places. And according to 2 Maccab. i, from them descended the Cyrenian Jews, of whom was Jason, who wrote the history of the Maccabees in five books. On this subject Prideaux says, "The second book of Maccabees is an abridgment of the five books originally written by Jason." These Cyrenian Jews became in process of time very numerous, hence we read of 100,000 of them being slain in a mutiny which took place in the days of Vespasian. And their strength and influence in the reign of Trajan were such as enabled them to obtain a temporary possession of the whole province. They then resorted to the general practice of the times, of showing their power and authority by massacring a vast number of the original inhabitants.

For many years Judea remained under the government of the Ptolemies of Egypt, and enjoyed almost uninterrupted peace and prosperity. Those who settled in Egypt were allowed to enjoy equal privileges with the Macedonian colonists. They also found protection in Syria and Asia Minor, and with the Greeks, especially at Antioch, where they settled in great numbers, and became almost as numerous as they were at Alexandria. In Babylon, and in the countries beyond the Euphrates, they existed in great numbers. And it is thought by some that the Jews contributed materially to the establishment of the empire of Seleucus; and his settling them so numerously in his own city is regarded as a proof that he depended on them for as-

sistance in the support and perpetuity of his government. And it is here worthy of remark that at a later period, in the day of Antiochus the Great, about 200 years before Christ, it is related that, “when the countries of Phrygia and Lydia were considerably disturbed by intestine motions, Antiochus the Great, having had experience of the great steadiness with which these eastern Jews always submitted to their governors, sent 2,000 of their families, from the provinces of Mesopotamia and Babylonia, into those parts, to keep in check the seditious spirit of the former inhabitants; and from them, thus transplanted from Syria and Babylon, were descended most of the Jews whom we find scattered in great numbers all over the Lesser Asia at the time of the first promulgation of the gospel.”






CHAPTER VII.

The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament.



The Septuagint—The statements of Josephus and Philo—The three editions of the Septuagint—Dr. Andrews' opinion on the time the version was made—Prideaux's critical remarks—The writers of the New Testament quote from the Septuagint—The real cause of the version being made—As to its being the work of seventy learned Jews—The version made at different times—The Septuagint a genuine version—A work generally acknowledged to be of great antiquity—Most versions translated from the Septuagint—General reflections.

T is generally thought that while the Jews at Alexandria were in great favour with the king of Egypt, the Septuagint, or ancient Greek version of the Old Testament, was executed. This I am aware is a disputed question. We shall first give the opinion generally received concerning it, and then the various statements and criticisms thereon.

According to Josephus, Philo, and several other eminent authors, the Septuagint was made at Alexandria during the reign of Ptolemy the Second, commonly called *Ptolemy Philadelphus*, about the year B.C. 277,

but some writers say in the reign of *Ptolemy Soter*. To reconcile this discrepancy it has been supposed that the translation may have been executed when both reigned. They being father and son, they might have both reigned conjointly, or the work might have been commenced in the reign of the father and completed during the reign of the son, which appears most likely. We have already noticed that at this time the Jews resided in great numbers in various parts of Egypt, particularly in Alexandria; and these Jews became so accustomed to speak in the Greek language that they understood it better than their own Hebrew. This gave rise to the necessity of the sacred Scriptures being translated into the Greek language, both for the public services of the Jewish synagogue and, perhaps, more especially for the private instruction of Jewish families. According to Josephus, "Demetrius Phalereus, who was library-keeper for the king, proposed to him that a translation into Greek should be made of the books of the Jewish law: the king gave his consent, and sent messengers to the high priest at Jerusalem, bearing a letter to him, with valuable and magnificent presents. The high priest selected six eminent persons out of every tribe, whom he sent to the king with a present of a beautiful copy of the law. These seventy devoted themselves in Alexandria to the translation of the books of Moses into Greek. According to the wishes of the king, after the translation was finished, the Jews were brought together to the place where the laws were translated, and the new version was read over to them. The multi-

tude expressed their delight and gratitude at such an important work. In order that it might be still further perfected and made a standard for their general use, it was enjoined that if any one observed either anything omitted or anything superfluous he should take a view of it again, and have it laid before them corrected. The king rejoiced at the completion of so great a work, and had the laws read to him, and greatly admired them, and finally gave orders that the books which he had thus received should be taken great care of and preserved uncorrupted."

We may here notice that there are three editions of the Septuagint distinguished by St. Jerome. The first was that of Eusebius and Pamphilus, taken out of the Hexapla of Origen. The second was that of Alexandria, of which Hesychius was the author. The third was that of Lucian, a presbyter of Antioch. The most celebrated manuscripts of the Septuagint are "The Codex Vaticanus" and the "Codex Alexandrinus:" from these the late editions have been printed.

Mixed up with the above simple statements are to be found several curious particulars mentioned by ancient historians, which appear to us unworthy of notice, partly on account of their disagreement, and furthermore because they will not bear a close investigation. They seem like fables, originally designed to give importance to the work. Dr. Andrew, in his abstract of the "Chronology of the Books of the Old Testament," regards the whole as an untrue account of the Septuagint, and asserts that there are internal marks of its

being written after the apostolic age. He says, "Amongst others, its quotations from the New Testament may be held as a sufficient proof, although many turn the argument the other way, and say the apostles quote from the Septuagint." Yes, very many, who are equally as well versed in biblical literature as Dr. Andrew, have said "the apostles quoted from the Septuagint," and until we have more light on this subject than Dr. Andrew has yet given we cannot fall in with his peculiar views; and we think it does not require a man of great learning or extraordinary biblical knowledge to discern that the apostles wrote subsequent to the execution of that version called the Septuagint. This we shall endeavour to make manifest. Dr. Prideaux, who thoroughly investigated all which appeared of any importance which had been written previous to that time, says, "That there was a translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek made in the time that the Ptolemies reigned in Egypt is not to be doubted, for we still have the book, and it is the same which was in use in our Saviour's time; for most of those passages which the holy penmen of the New Testament do, in the Greek original of it, quote out of the Old Testament are now found verbatim in this version." In confirmation of what is here stated by this accomplished classical scholar, we might refer to many texts of the New Testament on which other learned men have expressed their opinions. Take, for instance, Heb. ii. 6, and observe the construction of the quotation,—"*But one in a certain place* (Psalm viii. 4) testified, saying, What

is man that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him?" Dr. A. Clarke says, "This quotation is verbatim from the Septuagint. The original Hebrew is, *mah enosh ki thizkerennu, uben Adam ki thiph-kedennu*; What is miserable man that thou rememberest him? and the son of Adam that thou visitest him?" And similar proofs occur in various places of the New Testament. Now any man of clear intellect, who has but a limited knowledge of the sacred languages, may see, by comparison, whether the apostles quoted from the original Hebrew or from the Greek version.

The real cause of the septuagint version being made, as stated by the Jewish historian, may, for the benefit of ordinary readers, be further explained. The Jews who had settled in Alexandria and in various parts of Egypt, and who had the same privileges granted to them as the Macedonians and Greeks, as before mentioned, were necessarily brought into constant intercourse and conversation with other citizens who used the Greek language, it being the common language spoken at that time in Alexandria. And, consequently, being obliged to use the Greek in ordinary life, they by degrees forgot the Hebrew, in which the law was read in the synagogue; neither did they understand the Chaldee, by which the Hebrew was interpreted after the captivity; hence the necessity of a Greek translation for the benefit of these Hellenists or Grecian Jews. The version therefore served the same purpose in Alexandria, and in Egypt, as the Chaldee paraphrases did in Jerusalem and Judea after the Hebrews returned from Babylon, and

would no doubt be made use of for a similar purpose in those Grecian cities where the Hebrews had settled; these we regard as the true and real causes of the Greek version being made, which is now generally called the *Septuagint*. As to it being the work of seventy learned Jews, who while preparing the work were shut up in separate cells in the Island of Pharos, and the various copies which they produced being word for word alike, and the vast sum of money advanced by Ptolemy to obtain this version (which in real value amounts to £1,980,535 sterling) as stated by Aristobulus, Aristeas, Philo, Josephus, Justin Martyr, and others who have copied from them, such as Epiphanius, Eusebius, and a host of more modern writers, we cannot but regard their statements as fabulous; at any rate, they cannot all be right, for in relation to many particulars they contradict each other. On this subject we close with a quotation from Dean Prideaux, and a few general observations.

“From the fable of Aristeas, the Greek version hath since been called the *Septuagint*; for that fable from the first preaching of it, having generally obtained, first among the Jews, and afterwards among christians, soon caused this name to be given to that version. At first the law only was translated. Aristeas, Aristobulus, and Philo say the law only was translated by the seventy, and Josephus more expressly tells us, in the preface to his antiquities, that they did not translate for Ptolemy the whole scripture, but the law only. That it was done at Alexandria, the Alexandrian dialect

which appears throughout the whole version is a manifest proof. That it was made at different times and by different persons, the different styles in which the various books are found written, and the different ways in which the same Hebrew words are translated, and different places, and the great accuracy with which some of the books are translated above others, are full of demonstration." This version has been in use amongst all christians ever since the Apostolic age. As a proof of this the same author says, "The evangelists and apostles, whoever were the holy penmen of the New Testament scriptures, all quoted out of it; and so did all the primitive fathers after them. All the Greek churches used it, and the Latin fathers had no other copies of those scriptures in their language till Jerome's time but what was translated first from it. Whatever comments were written on any part of them this was always the text, and the explanations were made according to it; and when other nations were converted to christianity, and had those scriptures translated for their use into several languages, these versions were all made from the Septuagint, as the Illyrian, the Gothic, the Arabic, the Ethiopic, the Armenian, and the Syriac. There was indeed an old Syraic version translated immediately from the Hebrew original, which is still in being, and which was at this time made use of by all the Syrian churches in the east; but besides this there was another version of the same scriptures made from the Septuagint."

The above facts, we think, are sufficient to show that

whenever and by whomsoever the septuagint version was made, it has been, and ever will be regarded as a faithful translation of the word of God out of the sacred language in which it was originally written. And in all probability it was the first translation of the Holy Scriptures, except the Chaldee paraphrases, ever made; and is also generally regarded as the best. It was no doubt made in the order of divine providence for the benefit of the Gentile nations, as well as for the comfort and edification of the scattered Jews, for by this means many amongst the eastern nations would become partially acquainted with the word of God, the operations of his providence, and character of his moral government, much better than by any other means. To go any further into this subject, would be a departure from the special object we have in view, namely, a brief history of the Jews.





CHAPTER VIII.

The Jews persecuted by the Egyptians and Syrians.



Ptolemy Philopater goes to war with Antiochus and gains possession of the whole of Palestine—He visits Jerusalem, and forces his way into the holy place—Takes offence, and threatens to punish the Jews—Returns to Alexandria, and commences a persecution against the Egyptian Jews—Attempts to destroy them with elephants—God delivers the Jews—The *third* book of Maccabees not in the English version—Scopas appointed governor of Jerusalem, and oppresses the Jews—Antiochus gains possession of Judea—It is retaken by Ptolemy—Restored again to the Syrian king—In these contests Jerusalem suffered greatly—The Syrian tyranny, and the dreadful condition of the Jews—Simon the Just—Antigonus of Socho—The Mishnical doctors—Change in the constitution of the national council—Origin of the Sadducees by Sadoc—Onias the son of Simon the Just.



N the last chapter we had the pleasure of recording some very interesting particulars respecting the happy condition of the Jews in Egypt, and the great favours which they obtained from the king; but their peace and prosperity were disturbed through a fearful occurrence which took place at Jerusalem. The circumstances of the case we shall sum up in as few words as possible. In the year B.C. 217,

Ptolemy Philopater went to war with Antiochus the Great, under some pretext, for the purpose of obtaining possession of a part of his Syrian dominion. The two armies met at Rapia, a town lying between Rhinocora and Gaza. Ptolemy compelled Antiochus to retreat to Antioch, and consequently all the cities of Palestine and Cœlo Syria at once submitted to the conqueror. Soon after this occurrence the king of Egypt visited the country of Palestine in person, and, coming to Jerusalem, he offered many sacrifices and oblations in the temple, on which occasion he attempted to enter into the sanctuary and into the holy of holies, where the high priest only was permitted to enter once in the year, on the great day of expiation. The high priest explained to him the sacredness of the place, and the prohibition contained in the law; but the king nevertheless pressed his way into the inner court. But when he was about to enter into the holy place he was seized with such great terror and mental confusion that he fell down as if dead, and was carried out of the place. On his recovery he abruptly left Jerusalem, and in great wrath threatened to punish the whole Jewish nation. Accordingly, when he arrived at Alexandria, he immediately commenced his work of revenge on the Alexandrian Jews; published a decree by which he attempted to compel them to idolatry; but knowing they would refuse to comply, his real design was to inflict upon them some severe punishment. There were only 3,000 who forsook their God in order to secure the favour of the incensed king. The remainder stood firm in the

profession of their religion, choosing rather to die than to apostatise from the Hebrew faith. Those who submitted to the king's decree were abhorred by their countrymen, and excluded from Jewish society. Ptolemy being informed of this, regarded such conduct as contempt of his authority, and was so enraged that he resolved to extirpate all who refused obedience to his mandate. He therefore commanded all the Jews in Egypt to be brought in chains to Alexandria, and caused them to be shut up in the hippodrome, with an intention to have them destroyed by enraged elephants. The hippodrome was a large place without the city where the people assembled for public amusements. After being confined in this place for three days, in expectation of suffering martyrdom, the king gave orders for the elephants, which were made drunk with wine for the purpose of making them more fierce, to be let loose upon the imprisoned Jews. But to the astonishment and terror of the spectators, the elephants, instead of attacking the Jews, as expected, turned round upon those who had assembled to witness the impious and cruel sport, and immediately destroyed many of them. Ptolemy, heathen as he was, regarded this as a signal of divine vengeance, and refrained from further persecution, revoked his former decree, and restored to them their privileges. The substance of this account is recorded in the *third book* of the history of the Maccabees, which book, on account of its being considered of less authority than the first and second books, is omitted in our English translation, "But it is

extant in the Syriac language, and is in most of the ancient manuscript copies of the Greek Septuagint. The name Maccabees was of later origin than the time of this persecution, but because of the Jews of Alexandria suffering in the same cause of religion as did the real Maccabees, for this reason, these, as well as others who endured martyrdom for the profession of truth, were called Maccabees by the later Jews." *Ency. Metro.* vol. i. page 638.

In the reign of Ptolemy Epiphanes, who succeeded his father, Ptolemy Philopater, Scopas was appointed governor of Jerusalem, who by his tyranny alienated the affections of the Jews from the Egyptian princes, and thereby produced much dissatisfaction. Antiochus, king of Syria, observing this, deemed it a fit opportunity to attempt the conquest of the Judaical provinces; and the Jews being anxious to shake off the Egyptian yoke, submitted to Antiochus, whom they willingly received, and furnished with supplies for his army; and in return they received from him money for the purchase of sacrifices, the remission of some oppressive taxes, and other manifestations of gratitude and favour. Soon afterwards, however, we find Judea under the power and government of Ptolemy; but this was only for a short period, after which it was restored to the dominion of the Syrian king. In these invasions, conquests, and counter-conquests, the land of Judea, and especially its capital, which was the battle ground of these contending princes, suffered much, in reference both to loss of property and life. The men were slain,

their property plundered, and the whole population that remained alive were reduced to extreme suffering. As a matter of fidelity, we are bound to notice that ambition, rapacity, and the consummate cruelty of some influential unprincipled men of their own nation brought upon them dreadful calamities and terrible inflictions, the particulars of which we cannot fully record. Thus, their own impious conduct, together with the tyranny of their Syrian oppressors, brought about such a dismal state of affairs, in relation to both religion and temporal matters, that it may be regarded as the darkest period of their whole history, from their return out of Babylon to the final destruction of their nationality.

Historians relate many distressing accounts and wonderful stories illustrative of the horrible condition of the Jews while they were under the Egyptians and Syrians. At times they obtained favours and protection, but again they were made the subjects of cruel punishment and abominable persecution; and in many instances their own folly and wickedness brought upon them retributive justice. We may just mention a few particular cases, especially in relation to the decline of religion and the corruptions practised in the administration of their ecclesiastical government by the high priests. For the sake of bringing before the reader a chain of important events, we must be allowed a little retrospective digression, and commence with Simon the Just, whom the Jews say was the last member of the Great Synagogue, which consisted of 120 distinguished persons, who returned with Ezra from the Babylonish

captivity. Simon the Just was undoubtedly a pious man, and he made great exertions during his life for the preservation of right principles and the establishment of pure religion. The Jews relate many wonderful stories concerning him, and what took place about the time of his death, which, in our judgment, are unworthy of being recorded; readers who have a taste for such things may consult the Jewish historian. At the death of Simon the Just, Eleazar, his brother, who succeeded him in the high priesthood, gave up the presidency of the national council to Antigonus, of Socho, who was a man distinguished for his learning, especially in the law of Moses. He is said to have been the founder of the school of the Tanian or Mishnical doctors, by which name the doctors of the Jewish law were afterwards distinguished. There are references made to them in the gospel, as "sitting in Moses' seat." The men of the Great Synagogue only taught the Scriptures to the people, but the Mishnical doctors added also the traditions of the Elders, and maintained that they were equally obligatory with the law of Moses.

This was the first innovation which tended to unsound instruction in matters of religion after the captivity. When Antigonus died another change took place in the constitution of the national council, viz., the appointment of a vice-president, who taught jointly in the chief school of divinity. This fact shows that there was such a demand for this kind of teaching, that the president, or chief teacher, required an assistant. We further find, as might reasonably be expected, that the

introduction of traditional teaching gave rise to various conflicting opinions and disputations. Hence we are informed that the sect of the Sadducees originated through this method of instruction, for Sadoc, the founder of the Sadducees, was a scholar of Antigonus. From the instruction which Sadoc received under the tuition of Antigonus, he learned that God must be obeyed not for the sake of reward, or from a fear of punishment, but from a sense of duty and filial affection, which we hold to be sound and scriptural, when rightly understood. From this doctrine it seems Sadoc inferred the non-existence of rewards after this life, and consequently taught that there was neither resurrection nor a future state, but that all rewards were confined to this life. In schools of divinity, where the knowledge of God and religion are taught as mere matters of sacred science, without due regard to experimental religion and practical piety, there is great danger of their being carried away with mere abstract principles to the neglect of fundamental religious truth.

Onias, the son of Simon the Just, one of the successors in the pontifical chair, was a very base and avaricious man, who, while the Jews were under tribute to the Egyptians, was found guilty of appropriating the tribute money to his own use instead of transmitting it to the king of Egypt. This so enraged the Egyptian monarch that he threatened that if the defalcation was not immediately made up he would banish the Jews from their cities and country, and people their territories with Egyptian colonists. But the infatuated

Onias was still determined to retain his perfidious gain, and had it not been for the prudent conduct of Joseph, his nephew, who, by his upright conduct and faithful services, appeased the indignation of Ptolemy, the threat, no doubt, would have been carried into execution, to some extent at least.





CHAPTER IX.

The Apostacy of the Jewish Pontiffs.



The wicked conduct of the high priests, Jason and Menelaus—Jason supplants Onias the 3rd—Sinks into Apostacy—Encourages heathenism—The nation full of infidelity and crime—Jason unseated by his brother Menelaus—His great wickedness—Supports the customs of the Greeks—The evil of the temporal and spiritual Government being invested in the high priest—Antiochus—The shameful death of Onias—Lysiniachus, the actual murderer of Onias, put to death—Jason raises an army and enters Jerusalem—Antiochus comes from Egypt in haste to Jerusalem—Makes a general slaughter—Enters into the temple and holy place—The daring affront which Antiochus and Menelaus offered to Jehovah. The temple plundered of its treasures—Antiochus makes another expedition into Egypt—Is met by Popillius, a Roman consul—Withdraws his army from Egypt—Marches into Palestine, and instructs Apollonius to destroy Jerusalem—The city spoiled—A strong Syrian fortress built near to Jerusalem—The sufferings of the Jews—Discrepancy between Josephus and the author of the second book of Maccabees.



SHORT time before the Maccabean reformation the conduct of the high priests, Jason and Menelaus, was most disgraceful in its nature and disastrous in its consequences. When Onias the third was high priest, his brother Jason supplanted

him in the most impious and dishonourable manner, which was unquestionably one cause of the nation's subjection to the Syrian persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes, which immediately followed. Jason and Menelaus not only apostatised from the Hebrew religion but openly encouraged the abominations of heathenism, and seemed to give themselves up to work wickedness with greediness, without either the least religious or moral restraint. Jason was so anxious to obtain the pontifical office, that he offered a bribe of 360 talents to the Syrian king if he would depose his brother Onias, and make him high priest in his place. Antiochus, without much hesitation, accepted the bribe, and in order to accomplish his purpose banished Onias to Antioch, where he was confined in prison for life. Jason, (whose original name was Joshua or Jesus, but who on taking the sacerdotal office, strange to say, assumed a Grecian name,) though he sustained the highest ecclesiastical position to which man ever could be raised, was, perhaps, the vilest wretch in the whole land of Palestine. For while he held this holy office, as high priest of Jehovah, (which, we must bear in mind, he obtained not by divine right but by bribery and cruelty,) he at great expense erected a Gymnasium, *after the fashion of the Greeks*, introduced heathen customs, a system of foreign education, and impiously endeavoured by every possible means to ignore and undermine the divine authority of the Jewish religion, and to totally set aside the Mosaic institutions. One historian says, "The year after his appointment to the high priest-

hood, the Quinquennial Games were celebrated in Tyre, in honour of Hercules, the tutelary deity of the country. To this Jason sent some of his friends, whom he had made freemen of Antioch, to be spectators of the games and to offer a donation to be expended in sacrifice to the heathen deity; but those who carried the offering had so much fear of their God Jehovah remaining in them as not to involve themselves in the guilt of this idolatry, and instead of giving the money to the use of the games, they presented it to the Tyrians towards repairing their fleet."

Now it cannot reasonably be supposed that Jason was the sole agent in this great and dreadful apostacy, for, however great his influence might have been on account of his high office, had there not existed in Jerusalem an inclination for heathenism, the people would not have so quietly yielded to the apostatising innovations of their high priest as to completely exchange the holy worship of the Almighty, and establish the impure services of paganism in its place. Whenever infidelity is publicly demonstrated on so large a scale, its destructive elements must have been operating for some time on the moral and intellectual constitution of its votaries and adherents. We know this was the case in France in the last century. For some time previous to its national demonstration of infidelity, Voltaire and others had, by means of their deistical philosophy, degraded and corrupted the minds and morals of the people, until the true faith of christianity was obliterated from their inner nature; therefore, as soon as the

change of political circumstances offered an opportunity for a more public declaration of their sentiments, the most destructive elements and moral effects of infidelity burst out in all their fury, and, like the heathenism in the time of Jason, threatened the complete ruin of the whole empire. And we might here inquire, what was the cause of this French infidelity? Misrule, oppression, and religious hypocrisy in the priesthood, may be regarded as the principal causes of the national infidelity and revolution; for when princes and governors rule oppressively, and priests indulge in religious mockery and trickery, no wonder if the people turn infidels, and resort to rebellious measures to claim what they deem "the rights of man."

Jerusalem could not exist long under such a pressure of God-insulting crimes, which were constantly accumulating through the wicked conduct of the high priest. For Jehovah was publicly insulted in the holy place, and the consecrated altar was made to bear sacrifices offered up to pagan deities. On the head of Jason fell, after three years of pontifical mockery, the heavy hand of retributive justice. He had unseated his unoffending brother by bribery, and his artful insinuations caused his banishment for life; but now in his turn he must fall by the same means. His brother, Menelaus, who had learned lessons of wickedness from Jason's practical teaching, and who seemed to imbibe the same ambitious spirit, being sent by Jason to Antioch for the purpose of carrying the tribute money to the king and transacting some other important business, took advan-

tage of this opportunity, and thought he would also do a little business for himself. He offered a bribe to Antiochus of 660 talents for the high priesthood. Antiochus, who never hesitated to make merchandise of justice for a little earthly gain, readily complied, and sold his old friend Jason at a pretty good price, viz., for 300 talents more than Jason gave for the seat and the confinement of Onias. By these two transactions Antiochus would clear a very large sum; how much exactly we cannot say, as the value of a talent differs according to different ages and countries, but if we take the computation of money among the Greeks *by drachmæ*, a talent would be equal to £193 13s. English, making by that standard of value the total amount of the two sales £127,809.

Josephus says the original name of Menelaus was Onias, "the same with that of his eldest brother." But in imitation of his brother Jason he took a Greek name and called himself Menelaus. The father of these three sons was named Simon, said to have been a good man, as was also his eldest son Onias; but Jason, as we have seen, was a vile wretch, and Menelaus was no better, but worse if possible, for he seemed to be wholly given up to fraud, and all kinds of wickedness possible for him to commit. As soon as his mandate for office was despatched, at the Syrian court, he returned to Jerusalem, where he openly declared his apostacy, and encouraged the Jews to throw off the religion of their forefathers and follow the custom of the Greeks.

His object for getting into the office of the high priesthood was evidently not with the intention of prac-

tising any part of the Jewish worship, but to gain that temporal power, authority, and worldly gain which were then, and for a long time previous, associated with the pontifical office. For, shortly after the Jews returned out of captivity and were subject to the Persians, the high priest was constituted both temporal and ecclesiastical governor; and after the Macedonian conquest he continued to have the sole government of the nation, subject, of course, to the reigning sovereign to whom he was tributary. Therefore, in the office of high priest was united the power of Church and State. And we may here remark that this proved to be a great curse to the Jewish nation. The priesthood was, considered in itself, of divine authority and a sacred office, and the numerous important duties involved therein were quite enough for any one man to efficiently manage. When the temporal government of the nation became associated with it, the latter being the bestowment of earthly monarchs, the king supreme had the disposal of both. This, in some instances, led to the appointment of men to this office who had no religious or moral qualifications for a proper discharge of their ecclesiastical duties. Jason and Menelaus were men of this stamp, and Antiochus, their imperial master, was a monster of wickedness. No wonder at their conduct bringing about the ruin of the nation.

After Menelaus had got established in Jerusalem by the assistance of an army which he took with him from Antioch, granted by the king for the purpose of deposing Jason, his conduct was most flagitious and disgraceful.

Having given a high price for his situation, and living extravagantly, when pay-day came he found himself short of money. Therefore, to meet his demands and pay the stipulated price of his elevation, he had recourse to sacrilege. He robbed the sacred temple of its precious vessels, and employed his brother Lysimachus to sell them at Tyre and other cities, and on being reproved for this sacrilegious transaction by Onias, who was then living at Antioch in confinement, he adopted measures to have him put to death. At this vile conduct the inhabitants of Jerusalem were so enraged that a sedition broke out, in which Lysimachus, the person who actually committed the profane robbery, was slain, and Andronicus, the actual murderer of Onias, was carried by the king's command to the place where he had taken the venerable exile's life and there put to an ignominious death. For Antiochus, wicked as he was, was not so bad as the Jewish high priest; he seemed to have some regret on his mind on account of the death of Onias, which had been brought about by his cruel brother. The consistent conduct of Onias during the period of his confinement at Antioch had no doubt made a favourable impression on the king's mind, and he would, in reality, regard him as a better man than either of his brothers, to whom the high priesthood had been granted for money. Menelaus, who had been the cause of this murder and the insurrection which ensued as a consequence, still escaped with impunity. He returned to Jerusalem, and for a short time seemed firmly established in his dignified office. But he was soon disturbed

by his rival brother, who, like himself, was a rapacious usurper.

While Antiochus was in Egypt, on a military expedition, it was rumoured in Palestine that he was dead. Jason hearing of this, regarded it as a fit opportunity for himself to regain his position in Jerusalem. He succeeded in raising an army of a thousand men, and, with them, came suddenly and unexpectedly on the city, and captured it without much opposition. Menelaus was alarmed, and in confusion fled to the castle for shelter, to avoid the fury of his revengeful brother. Jason got possession of the city, put many of the inhabitants to death, whom he indiscriminately regarded as his enemies. When Antiochus heard of this outbreak, he regarded it as a national revolt against himself, and without deliberately inquiring into the cause, placed himself at the head of his troops, and marched with all possible speed out of Egypt into Palestine. Being informed, on his arrival in Judea, that the people in Jerusalem were making great rejoicings on account of his supposed death, he was so much incensed that in great rage he laid siege to the city, slaughtered 40,000 of its inhabitants, and sold an equal number into captivity. Jason fled from his presence, and for the remainder of his life became a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, detested as a traitor to his country, and was regarded as a monster of iniquity. "After wandering about among the Ammonites in Egypt and in Lacedemonia, he died a most miserable death, having not one

friend to give him burial." This was the end of Jason, who so wickedly usurped the office of his pious brother.

Antiochus, after the general slaughter, impiously rushed into the holy temple, even into the inner and sacred recesses, "the Holy of Holies," and there offered horrible indignity and affront to Jehovah, Menelaus being his conductor and abettor. It is said that these two vile monsters, the king of Syria and the high priest of Jerusalem, sacrificed a swine upon the altar of burnt offerings, after which broth was made with some part of the flesh, and with this they sprinkled the temple for the purpose of defiling it. They then commenced to plunder the sacred place—took away the altar of incense, the shew bread, the table, the candlestick of seven branches which stood in the holy place, and many vessels, all of gold, to the value of 1,800 talents of gold, or upwards of £600,000 sterling; and in like manner Antiochus plundered the city. On his departure from Jerusalem he carried with him the spoils of Judea, as well as Egypt, which, both together, amounted to an immense amount of riches. "For the further vexation of the Jews, he appointed Phillip, a Phrygian, who was a man of very cruel and barbarous temper, to be governor of Judea, and Andronicus, another of like disposition, to be governor of Samaria, and left Menelaus still to be over the Jews in the office of high priest, who behaved worse to them than any of their lay oppressors.

About two years after Antiochus had committed such

destruction at Jerusalem, at the head of a numerous army he made another invasion of Egypt. But by this time the Egyptians had obtained the assistance of the Romans, who were then rising in power and extending their dominions in every direction. Popillius, a Roman consul, who met Antiochus in Egypt, after some parley and consultation, drew a circle round him in the sand, and compelled him to give an immediate answer as to whether or not he would comply with the mandate of the Roman Senate, and peaceably withdraw his army from Egypt. After a little hesitation, Antiochus consented to obey the command which Popillius came to enforce, and they, having previously been intimate friends, embraced each other as a token of their former friendship. But Antiochus was greatly disappointed, and much mortified, on being thus obliged to withdraw his forces from Egypt, and seemed determined not to return home without spilling blood and committing some daring act of plunder; and in his diabolical deliberations he worked himself up to a determination to once again vent his wrath and malice on the Jews, who, at that time, were not in a position to withstand his forces. Therefore, on his counter-march through Palestine, he sent a detached force from his grand army, of 22,000 men, under the command of Apollonius, with instructions to destroy Jerusalem, plunder the cities of Judea, murder all the men, and save only the women and children alive. Apollonius was just the man to execute the sanguinary commission, for, like his master, he delighted in cruelty and crime.

On his arrival at Jerusalem, he concealed his purposes till the next Sabbath, and when the people were assembled in their Synagogues, for they still kept up a form of religion, he barbarously rushed upon them, and as far as possible executed the commands of Antiochus. The Syrian soldiers, after slaying all the men they could meet with, spoiled the city, set many of the buildings on fire, pulled down others, together with the walls, and with the ruins built a strong fortress opposite the temple. There they established a strong garrison, and made it a place of arms against the whole nation, laid up the spoils of the city, and stored it with various provisions of war. From this garrison the soldiers sallied forth and killed those who went to the temple to worship. This fortress and garrison, as subsequent accounts will show, remained a stronghold for the Syrians during the early part of the Maccabean wars, and was not in the possession of the Jews until the later days of Simon, the last surviving brother of Judas. The temple therefore soon became deserted, and the daily sacrifice omitted. After this destruction, and the suspension of divine worship in the temple, Jerusalem would exhibit a very dreary aspect. Many of its stately edifices were demolished, its walls were dismantled, its temple defiled with odious pollution, and the remaining population lived in constant fear of the Syrian garrison. We may just remark that Josephus confounds what was done by Apollonius with what was done by Antiochus two years before, which cannot be made to harmonise with the general history of the

neighbouring nations, and in the second book of Maccabees these two actions are distinguished as having taken place in the manner and at the times as above described; we therefore think the Jewish historian must, in this case, be in error.

As soon as Antiochus had returned from Egypt, having been baffled in his design on that nation by the interposition of the Roman Senate, he seemed determined to wreak his fury on all the nations within his own dominions. Accordingly, he issued a decree, that in all parts of his dominions the people should worship the same gods as he did. Though this decree was couched in general terms, it was evidently another blow aimed at the Jews, and was intended either to annihilate their religion or crush them out of existence. The heathen nations readily obeyed the king's commands. To change their religion and their gods was not a matter of much consequence to these ancient pagans. The Samaritans, who were either Jews or Gentiles for the sake of gaining favour and patronage, bowed to the storm without any resistance. Their policy was to claim kindredship with the Jews when they were in power and prosperity, but to disown them in the days of adversity and persecution. The Jews, therefore, were the only people in the Syrian kingdom who were likely to not submit to the decree of Antiochus.



CHAPTER X.

The Syrian Tyranny.

The cruelty of Antiochus in trying to compel the Jews to commit idolatry—The noble conduct of a Jewess and her seven sons—God preserves the Jews from destruction—Mattathias of Modin, and his five sons—The rise of the Maccabeans—1000 put to death who took refuge in a cave—Mattathias takes the field—Demolishes the pagan altars—His severity—The advice which Mattathias gave to his sons when dying—He is buried at Modin—Judas Maccabeus takes the command of the army—Various accounts of the origin of the term Maccabees—The reason why the Maccabean dynasty is sometimes called the Asmonsian dynasty.



THE Jews had frequently reason to complain of annoyance while under the government of the three Ptolemies of Egypt, but their conduct generally was mild and generous compared with the treatment which was afterwards received from Antiochus, the Syrian tyrant. While the Jews were under the Egyptian princes they were kept in a state of subjugation, and on some occasions rather rashly treated; but when they were brought under the Syrian yoke they were reduced, by degrees, to the lowest state of degra-

dation and misery, till at length their condition was no better than that of slavery. Antiochus, for the love of money, appointed the vilest characters the world ever produced to rule over them; men of corrupt minds and dissolute principles, who delighted in cruelty and oppression. He moreover used every means, by the appointment of special agents, to destroy the religion of the Hebrews, and enforced his cruel laws by penal sanctions. The generality of the Jews yielded to his impious domination, while those who valiantly withstood him, for the sake of maintaining their religious privileges, were in many instances put to slaughter. This work of heathenism, despotism, and devastation went on until the light of Israel was well-nigh extinguished, and the blackness of darkness rested over the whole land of Palestine, beneath which were perpetrated crimes of the deepest dye. The sacred altars were thrown down, or, what was still worse, they were appropriated to idolatrous worship, and the sheep of Israel, left without a shepherd, were scattered before ravening Syrian wolves.

But even in those dark days, in the midst of apostacy and the most horrible persecution, there were some who nobly maintained their fidelity to God's commands, and manifested invincible fortitude in the face of their oppressors, as there were in the days of Ahab and in the time of Malachi, when the holy prophets poured out their complaints and lamentations before God on account of national infidelity and apostacy.

Among the many instances of unflinching integrity

recorded by different historians, we shall mention one or two which cannot fail to impress the mind with correct ideas in relation to the power of divine grace and truth, which dwells in the hearts of all who have true faith in God. No matter where we find such characters, or in what age, or under whatever dispensation they have lived, we find the power of truth and grace to comfort and sustain is the same. Biblical history abounds with statements sufficiently clear and explicit to confirm this fact. And this is one particular characteristic in sacred history which renders its reading and study so refreshing, edifying, and comforting to all true believers in God's most holy word ; for the same reason religious biography is instructive and beneficial. We have therefore great pleasure in recording the two following accounts. In one case we see faith in God triumphantly manifested in the death of eight holy martyrs, and in the other the victorious results of a pious priest and his five valiant sons, who boldly stood up for the truth at the risk of their lives, through which eventually the nation was delivered from its oppressors, and true religion restored in the land.

When the cruel emissaries of the Syrian king were prowling about the land of Judea in search of prey they met with a pious family, consisting of seven young men, brothers, and their widowed mother. These noble young men refused to comply with the royal edict, which required them to abandon their religion, and practice the idolatries of paganism. For this offence they were brought before the king's officers, and con-

demned to endure the pains of martyrdom, as thousands of true Christians were condemned by the Papists in this country when they were in power. The venerable mother of these seven young men was present on the occasion, and while gazing on their fatal torments and witnessing their triumphant constancy, she seemed to rise superior to the tenderness of her maternal feelings, and the natural timidity of her sex, and in the presence of these *commissioned murderers*, who had power to inflict upon her the same tortures, she fearlessly animated her suffering sons in their death struggles, and encouraged them to look forward, beyond the torments of death, to God, for a recompense in that world where they would be for ever free from their oppressors. When she had witnessed the slaughter of her seven sons, she unflinchingly bowed her neck to the fatal stroke, and triumphantly followed them to glory. What a scene of savage brutality, blended with unconquerable intrepidity, moral heroism, and unfeigned piety, is here presented to our minds! Here lie the lifeless bodies of eight martyrs, at the feet of the savage monsters who had just taken away their lives. This was all they could do. The miseries of martyrdom were now over, and their happy spirits were elevated to heaven, to enjoy an eternal weight of glory. The idolatrous, blaspheming Antiochus, in the persons of his *commissioned emissaries*, by the repetition of like cruelties had done his worst to the unoffending Jews. He had corrupted their priests, influenced their nobles and rulers to unite with him in demolishing their cities,

plundered their property, slaughtered many of their bravest and best men, sold into slavery thousands of their women and innocent children, polluted their sanctuaries, insulted their God, and blasted the whole realm of Palestine with his repeated and numerous onslaughts and persecutions. A check is now put on his tyrannical course. In his turn he must be repaid and beaten with many stripes. God has in reserve for him a sharp sword and a bitter cup, and he must feel the power of one and drink the other to its dregs. The Almighty, in the administration of his retributive justice, in this case did not, as in some other cases, appoint some renowned hero at the head of a mighty army to humble his pride and punish him for his daring insults. But, in the first place, he is humbled and punished by a few despised and persecuted Jews, who, in defiance of all his princely power and authority, in spite of commissioners and armies, in defiance of all he could do by policy and persecution, would not renounce their religion or bow down to his idols. Neither could he destroy their national existence. God allowed the Jews to be persecuted for their apostacy and punished for their unfaithfulness, but not utterly destroyed. No; nor if all the great powers on earth had combined for the purpose of crushing the Hebrew nation out of existence, they could not have accomplished their design. There was incorporated in the Jewish nation and economy, downtrodden as the Jews were, the grand designs and dispensations of the "King immortal, eternal, and invisible," and the end was not yet accomplished for which

they were made a distinct and separate nation. Judah must still sway "the sceptre" and promulgate the divine law, until the promised Messiah makes his appearance.

In the year B.C. 167, Apelles, one of the Syrian officers, came to a place called Modin, "where dwelt Mattathias, a priest of the course of Joarib, a very honourable person, and one truly zealous for the law of God." His father's name was John, his grandfather was Simon, and his great-grandfather was named Asmoneaus, and from him the family was named Asmonœans. Mattathias had five sons, and like their father they zealously observed the law of God, and were equally determined to maintain their religion. Their respective names were Johanan, called Kadis; Simon, called Thasse; Judas, called Maccabeus; Eleazar, called Orvaran; and Jonathan, whose surname was Apphus. The whole of this pious family resolved not to render obedience to the king's mandate; and they at once gave a bold manifest proof, without any hesitation, of their utter detestation of the conduct of their barbarous visitors, and the timid meanness of the apostate Jews. Apelles, on his arrival at Modin, collected the people for the purpose of compelling them to renounce their religion and worship the gods of Antiochus, and being aware of the great influence of Mattathias and his brave sons, he first urged their compliance with his requisitions, most likely thinking that if they yielded the multitude would follow their example. The venerable priest sternly declared his resolution never to forsake the law of God, or be driven from adhering to the

sacred institutions of his fathers, by either the command of Antiochus or the threats of his emissaries. While he was thus making a declaration of his principles and his fixed determination, a timid and dastardly Jew began to pay religious homage to an idol, and to sacrifice as Antiochus had commanded, at which the zeal and indignation of Mattathias were so excited that he slew the idolatrous Jew on the spot; after which Apelles, the Syrian general, and the few soldiers he had with him shared the same fate. And after Mattathias had overthrown the idol altar which had been set up by the Syrians, he said, "If any one be zealous for the law of his country and for the worship of God, let him follow me." This was the commencement of a series of battles fought and victories won by Mattathias and his sons, whose army and adherents were afterwards called the Maccabeans (or Maccabees). These wars we shall now briefly notice.

Mattathias, having taken this bold and desperate step, could not retreat or give himself up to the mercy of his enemies. He therefore instantly retired with his family into the desert, and bravely resolved to contend with the oppressors for the emancipation of the enslaved Jews and the restoration of their religious rights and privileges, no doubt feeling assured that God was with him and would defend him and direct his steps. He must have been a man of fixed and firm religious principles and invincible courage, or he would never have ventured on making such a bold resistance under such circumstances. After Mattathias had retired for

refuge and defence to the desert mountains, many others were animated to follow his heroic example, so that the number of refugees daily and rapidly increased. A company of them, amounting to 1,000, who had concealed themselves in a large cave near Jerusalem, were besieged by Philip the Phrygian, who was left governor of Judea. He at first endeavoured to persuade them to submit to the king's command, on which condition he promised them pardon, but finding they resolutely refused to submit he put the whole company to death ; and, being on the Sabbath day, they made no resistance by way of self-defence. On this account, after a deliberate consultation, they concluded that the law of the Sabbath, in cases of necessity, did not bind them to be passive ; and it was made a rule from that time to fight on the Sabbath, in cases of necessity, to defend themselves when pressed by their adversaries.

Mattathias soon gained sufficient numerical strength to enable him to take the field and confront their oppressors in open battle, and though educated for the priesthood, he proved himself to be a very prudent and vigorous warrior. As he was fighting in a righteous cause God was with him, as he was with his servants of old, Moses and Joshua. The first object of Mattathias was to demolish the pagan altars and restore the service of the Synagogue. His operations were characterized by a degree of severity which some might feel disposed to condemn, for he exterminated all the persecutors whom he captured, and in many instances inflicted the punishment of death on the apostate Jews who fell into

his hands. But when we remember the circumstances in which he was placed, the cause of his taking up arms, and the object he was labouring to accomplish, all of which may be regarded as palliatives in reference to the severe measures which he adopted, and that he regarded himself as being divinely authorized to thus act, we shall not find much reason to censure his apparent severity.

Mattathias being an aged man when he commenced the reformation was soon incapacitated for the hardships and fatigues of a military life, and knowing that his work on earth was drawing to a close, he called his sons together to give them his valedictory address, and appoint to each his future office. His dying advice was seasonable and strikingly appropriate. He exhorted and admonished them to be valiant in maintaining the cause of God against the enemies of their religion and their race, to act steadily in reference to their eternal interests and for the glory of God, and not even to count their lives dear to them in so good a cause. He also strongly urged them to be united among themselves—"I exhort you," said this venerable patriarch, "especially to agree one with another; and in what excellency any one of you exceeds another, to yield to him so far, and by that means to reap the advantage of every one's virtues." And to prevent any jealousies or dissensions, he expressed his wishes concerning their respective offices in the following impressive and significant language—"Do you, then, esteem Simon as your father, because he is a man of extraordinary prudence,

and be governed by him in what counsels he gives you. Take Maccabeus for the general of your army, because of his courage and strength, for he will avenge your nation, and will bring vengeance on your enemies; admit among you the righteous and religious, and augment their power." Having nominated Simon as chief counsellor, and Maccabeus chief commander, it was inferentially implied that the other sons must have such subordinate offices appointed to them as might be agreed upon by Simon and Judas.

After Mattathias had delivered his final address and dying advice, he prayed to God that his sons might be divinely assisted, and that the people might be restored to their former condition and constitution; shortly after which he died, and was buried at Modin, where he had long officiated as a faithful priest of true religion, and defended the faith at the peril of his life. Mattathias was one of the most pious and illustrious men of his nation. "His pious zeal, his intrepid valour, his lofty magnanimity, and his uncompromising fidelity to the cause of his God, placed him on a level with the most distinguished heroes whose actions and virtues illuminated the most shining periods of Jewish history."

On the decease of Mattathias, Judas Maccabeus, according to his father's wish and advice, took the command of the army; and his brave and magnanimous conduct throughout his eventful life justified his selection to this office by his sagacious and prudent father. Soon after the death of Mattathias, Judas appeared in the field, with standards uplifted and banners unfurled,

on which were inscribed a motto taken from Exodus xv, 11, "Who is like unto thee among the gods?" or "Who among the gods is like unto Jehovah?" Prideaux says, "The initial letters of the Hebrew words compose the word *Maccabi*, from which the heroes called Maccabees derived their name." But this has been disputed. Whiston, in a foot note to Antq. b. xii. c. 5, says, "This appellation was not derived from any initial letters of the Hebrew words on the banners of Maccabeus, *Mi Kamoka He Elim Jehovah*, as the modern Rabbins vainly pretend. The original name of these Maccabees and their posterity was Asmoneans, which was derived from Asmoneus, the great-grandfather of Mattathias, as Josephus informs us." This is a matter of comparatively little importance, but about which men of *profound learning* will continue to differ. We think the probability is that they were designated by both appellations. If they were originally called Asmoneans, as asserted by Dr. Whiston, they might afterwards be called Maccabees and Maccabeans, either on account of Judas Maccabeus being the chief general of the army, or on account of what Prideaux says, whose version of the Hebrew text (Ex. xv. 11) is, "*Mi Cami Ka Baelim Jehovah*." Apart from the criticisms and opinions of learned men, one should naturally be disposed to conclude they were called Maccabees and Maccabeans because they were followers of Judas Maccabeus and fought under his standard, and we see no just reason why they should be called Asmoneans, and the dynasty established by Judas and his brother Jonathan should be called the

Asmonean dynasty. The princely authority was not established in this family until the fourth generation from Asmoneus. Judas Maccabeus was first raised to this position in Judea, not because Asmoneus, from whom he descended, was once a reigning prince, but by his own skill and valour, being actuated, not by ambition or usurpation, but by the highest and noblest principles of human nature, the love of his nation, and the determination to free his country from idolatry and heathen oppression, and to restore the divine institutions. And the princely power which he acquired by his sword and his prayers was consummated in the person of his brother Jonathan, who was deservedly acknowledged by the Syrians, the Egyptians, and the Roman Senate as the reigning prince in Judea. We may, therefore, regardless of either ancient or modern historians, without any inconsistency, designate the posterity of this family, who for one hundred and twenty-six years held the government of Palestine, by the appellation of Maccabeans, as being quite as appropriate as the term Asmoneans, if not more so.



CHAPTER XI.

The Maccabean Conquests.



The Maccabean army engages in battle with Apollonius—Gains an important victory over the Syrian General—Fights a second battle with Seron—The third engagement with Lysias' troops, and again conquer the Syrians—The Maccabeans greatly enriched with the spoils of the Syrian camp—The fourth victory over Timotheus and Bucchides—The great army of Nicanor marches into Judea but is beaten by the Maccabeans—End of the first series of campaigns—Judas proves himself to be a skilful and heroic general—Interval of rest—The Maccabeans return to Jerusalem to clear and dedicate the temple—Daniel's prophecy fulfilled.



HE number of the Maccabean army at the commencement of Judas' generalship consisted of only 6,000 men, of whom many would be unaccustomed to the use of arms. With this comparatively small force he soon joined in battle with Apollonius, the Syrian general, whom Josephus designates "the general of the Samaritan forces." Apollonius was killed in this engagement, and his army completely defeated. Judas took the sword of his

persecutor, and ever afterwards powerfully and successfully wielded it in battle. This conquest furnished the Jews with much necessary provision, for "he took a great deal of prey from the enemy's camp." Seron, the deputy-governor of Cœlo Syria, on hearing how Apollonius had been beaten and slain in battle, collected a vast body of troops to avenge the death of his colleague, and marched against the army of Judas. But again the Syrians were discomfited and driven off the field by the heroic Maccabeans with great slaughter ; and Seron was found among the slain. In these two successful engagements Judas gave such proof of his valour and military dexterity, that the Syrian troops, who had ravaged the country and thrown down the cities, began to tremble before him ; it was therefore necessary for the king to make a more powerful effort to crush the insurgents, and signalize their chief captain as a monument of royal vengeance. Antiochus therefore began to collect all his army, with an intention to enter on his campaign in Judea, the following spring, as early as possible ; but a lack of money prevented him from thus acting. But he nevertheless committed a part of his army to Lysias, who was in great repute with him and stood high as a commanding officer, and gave him instructions to conquer Judea, to utterly destroy Jerusalem, to totally abolish the nation, and to dispose of the captured inhabitants of both sexes for slaves. This was the work allotted to Lysias, while the king proposed to visit his oriental provinces with another part of his army, to compel them to pay their tribute, which they had for some time withheld.

With this understanding Antiochus and Lysias parted, one to compel the payment of money from a number of tributary provinces, and the other to expend it in sustaining an army while it committed destruction, and shed the blood of his subjects in another province, where the people had resolved to throw off their oppressor's yoke. How far Antiochus was successful in his undertaking is not our business here to ascertain and record, but we are glad to find that Lysias got well beaten by the valiant and heroic troops of the famous Maccabeus. Lysias did not go in person to Judea, but committed 20,000 of his troops to Nicanor and Georgias, whom he appointed to lead the first charge against the little army of Judas, which consisted only of 3,000 men.

Judas assembled his men at Mizpeh, a place where the Israelites in former days had often met to supplicate the divine blessing by prayer, fasting, and the offering up of sacrifices. In imitation of these ancient worthies, Judas resorted thither to pray that the blessing of God might rest upon his attempts to free his people, and restore to them religious liberty and national prosperity; and having paid his vows to the Almighty, and feeling assured of his protection, in the full confidence of victory he sallied forth to meet the enemy, who were already in battle array and prepared to receive him. Judas, in encountering his numerous foes, displayed great skill as well as undaunted valour. He was by some means apprized that Georgias, with 5,000 foot and 1,000 horse, was advancing towards his camp, with intention to take him by surprise; he therefore left his

encampment during the night, and marched to attack the troops of Nicanor. This division of the Syrian army being much weakened on account of the numerous detachments which had been sent off for the above named purpose, under the command of Georgias, being taken by surprise in the night, became alarmed and confused, and was defeated with great slaughter. Their camp was fired, and 6,000 Syrians left dead on the battle ground. The detachment under the command of Georgias, seeing the flames from afar rising from the camp of Nicanor, fled in great dismay. Thus both divisions were speedily vanquished, and the army of Judas reaped great advantage from the spoils of the Syrian encampment.

Before this battle the soldiers of Judas were very inadequately armed, by reason of their poverty, on which account they gave some indications of being dispirited, but Judas encouraged them, and told them they ought to fight although it were with their naked bodies; but being supplied with abundance of arms and all the munitions necessary for a continued campaign, they were more than ever encouraged to prosecute their operations, and to make a bold stand against any auxiliaries which might arrive to assist their discomfited foes. Consequently, when Timothius, who governed the country beyond the Jordan, and Bacchides, a distinguished Syrian general, came to restore the declining affairs of their sovereign in Judea, the Maccabeans met them in battle and slew 20,000 of them, and again enriched themselves with the spoils of their vanquished enemies. These

successful engagements placed the army of Judas in a position to demand the surrender of some of the strong fortresses of the country, which were given up to them without much resistance. As to Nicanor, who had been so completely outgeneraled and beaten by Judas, he sneaked away from his shattered army, and ignominiously fled to Antioch, disguised in the character of a slave, and was obliged to inform Lysias, who was chief governor in the absence of the king, of his defeat. Lysias on hearing this news was confounded, and, dreading the consequences, thought it time to make a more vigorous effort. He therefore collected a powerful force, and went himself at the head of 60,000 foot and 5,000 horse. Lysias made his appearance in Judea with a determination to crush the Maccabean army out of existence, or compel immediate submission. Arriving at Bethsur, where was an important fortress, he pitched his camp, and there the undaunted Judas met him with 10,000 of his troops. After praying to God for divine assistance, the Maccabeans were ready for the engagement. They joined battle with the advanced division of the enemy, and severely beat them. Judas slew 5000 Syrians in this conflict, and his way of fighting so terrified the rest that they became discouraged, and fled before the banners on which were inscribed, "Among the gods their are none like Jehovah." Lysias himself was afraid of their desperate way of fighting, shrank from the face of a foe so terrible, and fled with his discomfited and broken army to Antioch. Thus ended the first series of campaigns and battles of the Macca-

beans against their Syrian invaders, in which the character and conduct of Judas Maccabeus were magnificently developed. Of his early training we know but little, further than that he was brought up in the fear of God, and was by his father instructed in the ways of pure religion.

Judas was certainly, in many respects, an extraordinary man, and was no doubt raised up by providence for this time of emergency, for the accomplishment of the special object which he singularly and successfully performed. He evidently possessed great skill and prudence in matters relating to warfare, or otherwise he was supernaturally guided by divine impulsions; perhaps he was favoured with both of these advantages. His army, though hastily formed, was by some means well disciplined and properly governed by officers of various ranks, so that his campaigns were carried on by deliberate schemes of artful resistance in the most orderly manner, so as to gain every possible advantage which a small army could secure over an invading enemy consisting of vastly superior numbers. He also possessed great personal courage, comprehensiveness of thought, genius, and talent of the highest order, so that he was capable both of devising intricate plans and carrying them out successfully. In two years he defeated, in four general engagements, three of the best and most skilful generals of the Syrian army, viz., Apollonius, Seron, and Lysias. This success of Judas, considering the paucity of his army, the hasty manner in which it was necessarily

formed, and the numerous disadvantages under which he had to labour in contending with the regular troops and able officers of Syria, who entered Judea with everything necessary for a regular and protracted campaign, must ever be a matter of astonishment, especially to those who understand the art and tactics of warfare and the operations of military life.

After the battle of Bethsur the Jews had an interval of comparative rest, during which period Judas brought the principal part of his army to Jerusalem, for the purpose of cleansing and dedicating the sanctuary. The accomplishment of this work was attended with considerable difficulty, and required the assistance of his soldiers, because the temple at that time was commanded by a strong fortress which the Syrians had erected on Mount Acra, and was still garrisoned by the enemy's forces. The elevation on which this heathen fortress stood has since been considerably lowered, so that the holy mount is now much higher, and the valley between them having been filled up gives the locality a very different appearance.

We have before noticed how the temple had been plundered of its precious vessels and valuable utensils by the wicked priests and the Syrian king; these Judas replaced by furnishing new ones. And on the twenty-fifth of the month Ceslen, the very day on which, three years before, Antiochus had polluted the altar with heathen sacrifices, and three years and a half subsequent to the desolation of the city and the temple by Apollonius, Judas and his countrymen celebrated the feast of

dedication with songs of joy and gladness. This dedication of the temple by Judas Maccabeus has been regarded as a fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy respecting the period of desolation, which he foretold should continue for three years and a half, or according to his own prophetic language, for "*A time, times, and half a time.*" It is believed that from this time the sacrifices were never interrupted until the final destruction of the city by Titus.





CHAPTER XII.

The Maccabean Wars with Various Nations.

Various nations form a league to exterminate the Jews—Antiochus threatens to make Jerusalem the grave of the nation—Struck with a dire disease and dies a miserable death—Judas inflicts chastisement upon the confederacy formed against him—He fights with the Syrians, Sidonians, and the Gileadites, who conspired against him—He divides his army into three divisions—His successful expeditions—That part of his army under the command of Joseph and Azarias defeated—The great Syrian army under the command of Lysias invades Judea—Judas meets him at Bethsur and gives him battle before the garrison—Peace made between Lysias and Judas—The Idumean war—Heathen idols found on some of the Maccabean soldiers and destroyed—Judas enters the country of the Philistines and is victorious—His trouble with the Syrian garrison—Lysias again lays siege to Bethsur—Judas gives him battle and retreats to Jerusalem—Eleazar is killed in a conflict with an elephant—Lysias is compelled to return to Antioch, but before he returns destroys the fortifications of Jerusalem—Menelaus, the high priest, came to meet Lysias, but he is put to death by order of the king.



THE Maccabeans had not only to contend with the Syrians and disaffected Jews, but with the hostilities of neighbouring nations, whose envy and hatred were excited by the success of Judas. These

nations formed a league for the utter extermination of the Jewish nation ; and commenced their bloody operations by killing the Jews who sojourned among them. They knew that Antiochus was preparing to renew his campaigns in Judea with an intention to either subjugate or destroy the whole nation, and they deemed this a favourable opportunity to unite with him in the accomplishment of his cruel purpose. But the design of this diabolical and cowardly confederation was providentially defeated in the sudden and awful death of this infernal tyrant. When Antiochus was on his way to Babylon, he was informed of the entire defeat of his generals in Judea, the abolishment of his heathen altars and the re-dedication of the temple at Jerusalem, and he was so enraged at his designs being frustrated that he commanded his charioteer to forthwith drive him with double speed to Jerusalem, and impiously vowed he would destroy the whole Jewish nation, and make Jerusalem the grave of its population. But while on his way thither, breathing out his horrible threats, he was suddenly struck with a dire disease which speedily terminated his life. While suffering under this dreadful stroke he would not slacken his speed, but drove on furiously in hopes of executing his vengeance on Jerusalem. At length his chariot was overturned with such violence that he was severely hurt, and had to be placed on a litter, but not being able to bear this he was carried to a place near at hand, called Tabac, where he was confined to his bed, and continued to suffer the greatest torments both in body and mind. In the secret

parts of his body he was afflicted with filthy ulcers, wherein were bred an innumerable quantity of vermin, which produced such an offensive stench that his attendants could not endure to approach him. In this state he lay actually putrifying until he died. His mental sufferings were still more terrible, for in mind he was tormented to madness, and in his delirious ravings he imagined he was continually surrounded by spectres and evil spirits. Thus died one of the greatest tyrants and vilest persecutors of God's people that ever existed on earth, and one of the most daring and impious blasphemers that ever insulted the Divine Majesty. We have recorded his horrible death on account of his wicked life, to show that such characters, of which there are certainly but few, do not go unpunished even in this life. Several similar characters have died in a similar manner, some of whom we may have occasion to mention at a future stage of this history.

The death of Antiochus, of course, prevented him from murdering the Jews, converting Jerusalem into a sepulchre, or further troubling the Maccabeans. This occurrence afforded Judas an opportunity of preparing to inflict chastisement upon the confederacy formed against him and his countrymen by the surrounding provinces. He commenced his successful campaigns against them at Acrabattene, a city inhabited by the Idumeans, of the posterity of Esau, and slew 20,000 of them. He then fought with the children of Bean, a tribe of the Edomites, whom he totally defeated, demolished their cities, and put their garrisons to the sword.

He then made an incursion into the land of the Ammonites, beyond Jordan, where he avenged on the Syrian governor the insult offered to him. The surrounding nations, hearing of the amazing victories of the Maccabean army, imagined themselves in danger, or perhaps it mortified their pride to see the Jews rising so rapidly to prosperity. Therefore the inhabitants of Tyre, Sidon, Ptolemais, and Gilead immediately commenced an active war against them. Judas was so completely encircled with these numerous enemies that it required every exertion and all his skill to enable him to withstand them. His army at this time being rather numerous, he thought it best to divide it into three parts. The first division was commanded by himself, with which he marched into the land of Gilead; the second was intrusted to Simon, for the defence of Galilee; and the third division was left in Jerusalem to protect the city and temple, which in time of war were always objects desired to be possessed by the enemy. The streets of Jerusalem have more frequently flowed with blood than those of any other city in the world. First, because the Jews have frequently been the subjects of persecution on account of their religion; secondly, because of the immense wealth frequently contained therein; thirdly, because of their apostacy God has frequently allowed them to be punished; and fourthly, because of the petty jealousies and ungodly rivalries amongst themselves. Therefore Judas acted wisely in providing for the defence of Jerusalem. As to himself, he soon overran the land of Gilead, took several towns,

and returned home laden with the spoils of his vanquished enemies. Simon was also successful in defeating the enemy in Galilee.

When the three divisions came together, that which had stayed at Jerusalem, under the command of Joseph and Azarias, manifested some dissatisfaction, and gave indications of disobedience, because it could not share the same fame as the others who had gained such victories. This was a spirit of pride and jealousy, which was speedily humbled and punished, not by the hand of Judas but by the enemies whom they rashly encountered for the purpose of gaining fame. These two generals, Joseph and Azarias, led out their forces on an expedition against Jamnia, a seaport town on the Mediterranean ; Georgias, the governor of the district, fell upon them, and they were driven home with a loss of 2,000 men. "The way of duty is the way of safety." "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted, but he that exalteth himself shall be abased." This disaster did not tarnish the glory or lessen the fame of either Judas or his brother, but rather tended to make them appear to greater advantage, while it humbled his aspiring and jealous generals.

Shortly after the army of Judas was consolidated at Jerusalem, as he found it necessary to make preparation to attack the principal enemy. The Syrian army of 80,000 men and 80 war elephants again made its appearance on the borders of Judea, under the command of Lysias, who was then guardian of young Antiochus, son of the deceased tyrant. His avowed object in this

expedition was the entire conquest of the country, and the total ruin of the sacred temple. But before the enemy reached Judea, Judas had taken care to fortify the fortress of Bethsur, which he rightly supposed would first be attacked by Lysias, and where he intended to give him battle for the purpose of checking his advancement into the interior of the country, and if possible to force a retreat. His plan was successful. Lysias laid siege to Bethsur. Judas immediately advanced with his invincible army to its relief, and fought the enemy before the garrison. He dispersed the invading army, and Lysias, weary of his unsuccessful attempts to subjugate the heroic Maccabeans, made peace with Judas, which was ratified by Antiochus.

By this peace the decree of Antiochus Epiphanes against the practice of religion among the Jews was rescinded, and free liberty was granted for them to live according to their own laws. Judas might now be regarded as the reigning prince in Judea. To this distinguished position he was raised, not by heirship, or by the virtue of ancestral right, but by his own valour and skillful determination to deliver his countrymen from oppression and persecution. He had, therefore, an indisputable right to govern the nation ; besides, no one was so well qualified for this office as himself. The treaty made by the Syrian king was not sufficiently powerful to check the warlike spirit of the surrounding nations, who continued their hostilities against the Jews, which they had been encouraged to commence during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, the father of

the then reigning young and feeble prince. Judas and his army was, therefore, soon called into action, and having subdued their troublers, returned from their expedition in triumph. The Maccabeans under Judas, after observing the feast of pentecost, which fell about this time, made war against Georgias and the Idumeans, and were again victorious, though Judas was pushed hard in battle, and lost many of his men. When they stripped the bodies of their slain there were discovered about them heathen ornaments and idols which had been taken among other spoils of war, which Judas regarded as proof that they had fallen into the sin of idolatry; and he concluded that God had punished them for so doing. These ornaments and idols were, therefore, collected throughout the camp and sent to Jerusalem to provide a *sin offering*; after which prayer was also offered to God for pardon. Shortly after this Judas besieged Hebron, the capital of Idumea, extended his march into the country of the Philistines, enriched himself with the spoils of their cities, and returned in triumph to Jerusalem.

He next attempted to reduce the troublesome fort of Acra, which was still held by the Syrians and apostate Jews, whom Josephus designates "renegade Jews." These continually disturbed the peace of Jerusalem, and interrupted the service of the temple by coming forth upon those who went to worship and killing them. It seems rather surprising that this heathen garrison was allowed to continue so long to the great annoyance of the reformed Jews. But Judas was aware that Acra

was a strong fortress and always kept well garrisoned, and would therefore require all his ability to reduce it; and being much engaged with repulsing the invading armies, and interposing on behalf of the oppressed Jews in the surrounding provinces, he, no doubt, thought it safest merely to defend the city against their attacks until he had an opportunity of bringing against them an overpowering force, and reducing their stronghold by a regular siege, and then taking them by storm. While Judas was engaged in this assault some of the apostate Jews escaped out of the garrison, and went with all speed to Antioch, to inform the king that Acra was besieged, and in great danger of being taken and destroyed. This news indicated the probability of the entire loss of Jerusalem, which the Syrians were very reluctant to give up. So long as they held the fortress of Acra they might be regarded as having contingent possession of the city; the Syrian government therefore determined to relieve the fort. An army consisting of 120,000 men, with thirty-two elephants and three hundred chariots, were soon in motion, on their way to Jerusalem, with a design to accomplish this object. Lysias took the command of the army, and was accompanied by the king in person. As before, Lysias commenced with the siege of Bethsur. Judas feeling anxious to preserve this important garrison left Jerusalem and went to the relief of the besieged fortress, and falling upon the enemy by night he speedily slew 4,000 of them, and then made a successful retreat. At the break of day a regular battle com-

menced, in which Judas and his army fought bravely and desperately, but being overpowered by the enemy he prudently withdrew from the battle field, and effected a safe retreat to Jerusalem.

In this terrible engagement Eleazar, the brother of Judas, lost his life in a conflict with an elephant. Coming into close quarters with the Syrians he recognized one of these powerful animals arrayed in royal trappings, which led him to conclude that the king was upon it. He immediately, and incautiously, rushed into the thickest of the fight, and after slaying many of the Syrians came in contact with the monstrous enemy. Eleazar stabbed it with his spear, but falling beneath its ponderous weight, he was instantly crushed to death. After the retreat of the Maccabeans Lysias renewed the siege of Bethsur and compelled the defenders to surrender the fort, after which he marched to Jerusalem, and besieged the sanctuary. According to all human appearance nothing now remained for the Maccabeans but submission or destruction. But when they were almost reduced by the want of provisions, and on the point of surrendering, Lysias received intelligence that Philip, whom the late king had appointed the guardian of his son and regent of the empire, had assumed, not only the government of the nation, but also the right to the crown. Lysias therefore deemed it expedient to make a hasty peace with Judas, and return with his army to Antioch, to put down the usurpation of Philip. This however he did not do before violating his treaty, for on being admitted into the temple he observed

the strength of its fortifications, and ordered them to be demolished. This seemed to intimate that he intended to revisit Jerusalem on the first opportunity, to fully accómplish his object, and consequently he would, while on the spot, make it as defenceless as possible.

Menelaus, the apostate high priest, whose infamous conduct has been before stated, had up to this period sustained his pontifical office, or at least borne that title; but during the period the Maccabeans were in power he had been living in concealment. When he heard that Lysias had arrived in Jerusalem with his powerful army, he deemed it a favourable opportunity to quit his lurking place, and show himself as the friend of the invaders of his country. But the king, influenced by some feeling or motives, (some historians think by a divine impulse,) was indisposed to show him any favour, and Lysias feeling enraged at his dastardly conduct, accused him to the king of being the cause of all the mischief which had troubled Judea; so the king ordered that he should be sent to Berrhoca and put to death. This vile wretch was there destroyed after the manner of such as were condemned for the worst offences. In that place there was a tower fifty cubits high, full of ashes, and to this Ash Tower Menelaus was committed. By means of an instrument formed for the purpose he was inserted alive into the midst of the ashes, and was there left to perish. Thus ended the mortal life of this sacrilegious pontiff, whose name stands on the historic pages of his nation as a monument of perpetual infamy.



CHAPTER XIII.

The Commencement of the Maccabean Dynasty.

Commencement of the Maccabean dynasty—Contention for the pontifical seat—Alcimus appointed high priest—He strives to overthrow the Maccabeans—Demetrius lands in Syria and asserts his claim to the Syrian crown—The Babylonians give Demetrius the appellation of Soter, or Saviour—Demetrius makes war with Judas—Alcimus tries to ensnare Judas, then accuses him to the king of Syria—Nicanor commissioned by Demetrius to establish Alcimus and cut off Judas—Nicanor forms a treaty with Judas—Alcimus goes again to the seat of government to complain of Judas—Nicanor again sent to Jerusalem to either destroy Judas or bring him prisoner to Antioch, but Nicanor is defeated by the Maccabeans—An interval of tranquillity—An alliance formed between the Romans and the Maccabean Jews—Judas is slain in battle—His general character.



Y the treaty before-mentioned Judas was appointed, by the King of Syria, governor of Judea; and this transaction may be regarded as the commencement of the Maccabean dynasty, for until this period Judas can only be regarded as the leader of a party of insurgents, who were nevertheless very justly striving to secure their religious privileges and political and civil rights. It was therefore an

insurrection in which every Jew, even to a man, ought to have been actively engaged. But when Judas was constituted the regular authorised governor of the land, by the monarch to whom the country was tributary, he was legally and politically, as well as by the power of his sword, the reigning prince.

No sooner had Judas entered on his high and important office, of chief governor of his country, than his troubles commenced with matters pertaining to the high priesthood. Onias, the son of the high priest of that name who was put to death, expected, when the king had condemned Menelaus, that he would be raised to the high priesthood, as it was his right to succeed to this office. But when it was given by the king to Alcimus, who was not of the high priest stock, it laid the foundation of unceasing trouble. According to Josephus, Lysias persuaded the king to translate this dignity from the family of Onias to another house, on which he (Onias) felt so disappointed and mortified that he fled into Egypt, "and having gained the favour of the king and his wife Cleopatra, he obtained a place in the Nomus of Heliopolis, wherein he built a temple in imitation of that at Jerusalem," and was much respected as a good and upright man. Book xii. 9.

The elevation of Alcimus to the high priesthood proved fatal to Judas, and at one time seemed to threaten the complete overthrow of all the Maccabeans had accomplished. Soon after Antiochus and Lysias left Jerusalem for the purpose of suppressing Philip,

which they soon accomplished, Demetrius landed in Syria and asserted his claim to the throne of Antiochus; and, in order to accomplish this bold attempt and consummate his preconceived design, he professed to have been sent by the Roman Senate to claim his right, and take possession of the kingdom. This usurper so gained upon the people, who believed his statement and dared not disobey the dictates of Rome, that they nearly all deserted their rightful sovereign and went over to Demetrius. Therefore, without much opposition, he seated himself on the Syrian throne. The young king and his tutor Lysias were seized by their own soldiers and delivered up to the self-made king, who instantly put them both to death.

Thus perished the last king belonging to the family of Antiochus the tyrant, and with him his tutor Lysias, who had caused so much trouble to the Maccabeans and the Hebrew nation.

The first thing which Demetrius did on being acknowledged the king of Syria, was to deliver the Babylonians from the tyranny of Timarchus and Heraclides, two brothers, who, being great favourites of Antiochus, the late king, were placed over the province, one as governor and the other as treasurer. Timarchus was put to death, and Heraclides was driven into banishment. This so pleased the Babylonians that they designated Demetrius "Soter," or the Saviour, and ever after that he was distinguished by this appended appellation (Demetrius Soter). It is very likely that Alcimus, hearing of this circumstance, and knowing that his own character was

sullied, and that he was detested by many of the Jews, made off to Antioch, collected together the runagate Jews who accompanied him, artfully charged the Maccabeans with disloyal conduct, and made a petition that Judas might be expelled from office. Demetrius, on hearing this statement, was so exasperated against Judas that he forthwith, without investigating the allegations, ordered Bacchides, who was then governor of Mesopotamia, to unite with Alcimus, whom he confirmed in his office, to make war on the Maccabeans and depose Judas. In so doing Demetrius acted not only too hastily but very foolishly, as he afterwards found when he wished to secure the aid of Jonathan and the Maccabeans to assist him against Alexander, who contended with him for the Syrian throne. Alcimus dreaded the valour and holy determination of Judas and his brave adherents, and therefore endeavoured by deceitful proposals to entrap him ; but Judas, who was prudent as well as valiant, suspected his design and avoided the snare laid for his destruction. Bacchides, having provided a force sufficient to protect the apostate Jews and their dastardly high priest, left the country. But Alcimus conducted himself in such a dishonourable manner towards the Maccabeans that Judas could not tolerate his proceedings, and Alcimus, not being able to cope with the Maccabeans in battle, again sneaked off to Antioch, taking with him a crown of gold and other gifts to gain the king's favour, and made his old complaint against Judas. He accused him as the sole troubler of the land, and said they

should never have lasting peace so long as he lived. On hearing this statement the blinded and infatuated king was so incensed that he ordered another army to be sent into Judea, under the command of Nicanor, with instructions to cut off Judas and thoroughly establish Alcimus in the full power and office of high priest. Nicanor seemed to dread the idea of meeting Judas, whom he knew, from past experience, was terrible in arms and dreadful in battle. He therefore very prudently endeavoured to settle matters by treaty. Nicanor and Judas met, ratified articles of agreement, and parted on friendly terms. But the treaty not being satisfactory to Alcimus, as it did not sufficiently provide for his interest and security, he went a third time to the seat of government, and prevailed on the king not only not to ratify the agreement, but to send Nicanor with positive orders to make war with the Maccabeans, and not to cease his operations until Judas was either slain or taken prisoner. Nicanor therefore, contrary to his own mind and feelings, renewed his hostilities against Judas and his party. Though the Syrian commander had with him a very powerful military force, he was twice beaten by his valorous opponents, and in the last engagement he lost his life. (See Prideaux, vol. ii. p. 492.)

After these defeats of the Syrian army, and the death of their commanding general, there was an interval of tranquillity, during which period a treaty of alliance was formed between the Romans and the Maccabean Jews. Judas had learned from past experience that no

dependence could be placed on the Syrian kings for the preservation of religious freedom; and being aware of the power of the Roman Senate and the conquests of the Roman arms in Africa, Greece, and among the oriental nations, thought it safest to form an alliance with that powerful government, before whose frowns the haughtiest monarchs trembled, and at the lifting up of its rod the tyrannical sovereigns of Syria had been compelled to crouch in humble submission. Besides, the Romans had, at that time, more regard for justice and honour in their senatorial transactions with dependent nations than any of the reigning princes and monarchs in the then known world. No earthly power, therefore, was so likely to assist the oppressed Jews in their justifiable and gallant struggle for liberty as the conquerors of Carthage and Macedonia. Therefore Judas, in council with his brethren, concluded to send a deputation to the Roman Senate, for the purpose of forming an alliance therewith, and to seek its immediate interference with Demetrius, whom they had reason to believe was again preparing to harass them. The Romans, whose object was the establishment of a universal empire, were ever ready to reduce the power of foreign princes, readily complied with the proposal of the Maccabeans, and agreed that the Jews should be received as allies. Demetrius was ordered to disturb the Jewish nation no more, as it was taken under the protection of the Roman Senate. But before this message was delivered to the Syrian king, the famous Judas was numbered with the dead. For when Demetrius received intelligence of the defeat

of Nicanor, and that he was slain in battle, he lost no time in sending a reinforcement under the command of Bacchides, who united with Alcimus to crush the Maccabeans. The army of Judas met them; but on this occasion there were only 3,000 to oppose the numerous army of invaders, and being terrified at the overpowering strength of the enemy the greater part deserted their general, and left him with only 800 men. Yet, such was the undaunted bravery of Judas, that with these few he faced the adversary, but being completely overpowered by their numbers he was slain in conflict, and the little army having lost their commander fled in dismay before their numerous foes. Judas had been so accustomed to gain victories over numerous enemies with a few men, that on this occasion he seemed to presume too much. The dead body of this fallen hero was taken up by Jonathan and Simon, his brothers, and laid in the sepulchre of his father, at Modin; while all the faithful in the land lamented over him, and severely bewailed their bereavement.

With regard to the general character of this truly wonderful man there scarcely can be two opinions. He was one of the greatest men that ever lived in any age or nation. A more heroic warrior never handled the sword. The wondrous exploits which he performed during the six years he was fighting for the liberty of his oppressed countrymen cast into the shade all the fame of Grecian and Roman heroes; nor was he a whit behind the bravest Hebrew generals who, in former times, had performed such prodigies of valour in expell-

ing the Canaanitish nations from the land of Palestine. In point of military fame and dignity of moral character, Judas ranks with Joshua and David, and, simply considered as a warrior, in some respects he seems to surpass either of them. They fought most generally under divine direction to accomplish the purposes of Jehovah in the establishment of the Hebrew nation, specially ordained by the Almighty; while Judas, though he was divinely assisted, and fought in the same cause, had not the same privileges of divine communication. He lived under another dispensation of circumstances. Hence he made no pretensions to either visions or dreams, oral communications, or immediate inspirations as instructions from God to act as he did. He knew perfectly well that he was doing right in supporting the honour of his God, the cause of religion, and the political rights of his countrymen. But while he thus believed and acknowledged God by prayer and supplication, and trusted in his providence and protection, he had to rely more on his own judgment and valour for the victories which he achieved, than either Joshua or David had. He fought not for conquest or earthly glory and aggrandisement, not for fame or the acquirement of power, but for the glory of God and the cause of religion. And though he commenced his warfare with but few adherents, his followers so multiplied that he inflicted such a scourge on the Syrian tyrants that they never regained their power over the Jews. His mental endowments corresponded with his undaunted and enterprising valour. He possessed both genius and talent,

skill in design, and ability to execute his comprehensive plans with amazing facility and dexterity. He was conscientiously and practically a religious man; and considering the time in which he lived, and the circumstances in which he was placed, he was decidedly pious, attentive to religious duties, a hater of vice, and a lover of virtue.

Josephus says, "the people gave to Judas, after the death of Alcimus, the high priesthood." This must be a mistake, for he was slain in battle the year before Alcimus died. He was never high priest, and the historian himself corrects this error in his regular catalogue of the high priests, and distinctly states that Alcimus died after filling that office three years, that no successor was appointed, and that the office was vacant for seven years, after which Jonathan, the brother of Judas, and his successors in the civil government, were made high priests. Therefore, to give either Onias IV., or Judas Maccabeus, a place in the list of the high priests, is erroneous. Alcimus supplanted Onias, and Judas was never appointed to that office.





CHAPTER XIV.

Jonathan made King and High Priest.



Jonathan succeeds Judas as commander of the Maccabeans—The Jews sorely oppressed—The Maccabeans flee into the wilderness for refuge—The Arabs attack John—Jonathan avenges the death of his brother on the Jambrian chief—The Arabs apply to Bacchides for assistance—Jonathan gives battle to Bacchides—Bacchides retreats to Jerusalem—Alcimus cut off in his guilt—The Romans interfere with the Syrians—No high priest in Jerusalem—Jonathan rises in power and authority—A plot laid to destroy all the Maccabeans—Jonathan and his followers flee into the wilderness of Bethbasi—Bacchides makes peace with Jonathan—The Maccabeans have rest—The Syrian kingdom agitated by Alexander Balas—Demetrius has to flee for safety—This dispute of advantage to the Maccabeans—Jonathan removes to Jerusalem—Jonathan regarded by the contending kings as a prize—He supports Alexander—Jonathan designated “the Maccabean prince and high priest of Jerusalem”—Jonathan renders Alexander great service—The fall of Alexander and the restoration of young Demetrius to the Syrian throne.



AFTER the death of Judas the religious Jews were severely oppressed and impiously insulted by Alcimus and Bacchides, who assisted him in the perpetration of his cruelties and unrighteous government. Jonathan, who succeeded Judas in the command

of the Maccabean forces, was now called upon to withstand this oppression. It is stated by some historians that the miseries inflicted upon the faithful Jews, under the tyrannical government of the apostate pontiff, backed and sustained by Bacchides, surpassed the sufferings which they endured under the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes; but we think this was scarcely possible.

Jonathan, in collecting his scattered forces, was narrowly watched, and closely pursued by his vigilant enemies, so that he soon found himself in personal danger, and therefore deemed it safest to flee, with his brother Simon, in to the wilderness for refuge, and there form an encampment near the Jordan. Their goods and property were committed to the care of John, their brother, who was instructed to remove them the best way he could to the country of the Nabatheans. While John was on his march, carrying out the instructions of his brother, he was attacked by a strong party of armed Arabs, of the tribe of Jambria, who slew him and carried away the baggage; a fact which shows that the Maccabeans had enemies on every side.

Jonathan hearing of what had befallen his brother, and how the triumphant Arabs were rejoicing over their conquest, and regaling themselves with the spoils they had taken, sooned turned their rejoicing into lamentation; for having received intelligence of a grand bridal procession which was about to take place on the celebration of a marriage between a Canaanitish nobleman and a daughter of the Jambrian chief, he

laid wait for them among the mountains, slew all the party, took their property as spoil, and in safety returned to his camp; feeling somewhat satisfied in thus avenging the death of his murdered brother, and regaining some compensation for the loss of his baggage. The defeated Arabs applied to Bacchides for assistance, or protection, who immediately marched against Jonathan and Simon, and commenced an assault on their camp on the Sabbath day; but they met with a stern and desperate resistance, and had to return unsuccessful. Jonathan, after reminding his army that it had been determined by his father, in council, that it was lawful to fight on the Sabbath, in defence, boldly resisted the attack of the Syrian governor, and slew a thousand of his men. But finding themselves overpowered by the numerical strength of the enemy, and being pushed in battle to the banks of the Jordan, they plunged into the river and swam over to the other side. The soldiers of Bacchides either dare not follow them any further, or deemed it best to retreat, so they returned to Jerusalem. Thus if they were not absolutely defeated, they were foiled and disappointed.

Bacchides, fearing the increase of Jonathan's power, commenced to repair the fortifications of Acra. This fortress he replenished with provisions of all kinds, and took as many children as he could of the chief men of the country, and kept them there as pressed hostages for the fidelity of their parents, thinking by this means to prevent further revolt. While this preparation was going on, to strengthen heathenism and weaken the

interest of true religion, Alcimus, the high priest, who with his apostacy had troubled Israel and caused many to err, was suddenly cut off in his career of guilt. While he was giving orders for the removal of a wall, which had been built for the purpose of separating the court of the women from the court of the gentiles, he was struck with the palsy, and died. Some have regarded this as the stroke of God, who was offended at his impious conduct, and resolved to rid him out of the way; for during his affliction, which lasted many days, he underwent severe torments, and then expired in great misery.

After the death of Alcimus, Bacchides returned to Antioch with a part of his forces, and the Jews had rest for two years. It is thought that the Roman Senate had further interfered, and thereby checked the tyranny of the Syrians. If this was the case, it partly accounts for the vacancy of the high priesthood, from the death of Alcimus to the time Jonathan was raised to occupy the pontifical seat, for Demetrius seeing the Romans regarded the Jews as their allies was indifferent about appointing a successor to this office.

During this short period of tranquillity, there being no high priest, the government of Judea would principally devolve on Jonathan who was rising in power and influence among the people, and after the manner of the ancient judges administered the affairs of both church and state, residing at Mackmash. But there were still a party working underneath against the Maccabeans, in correspondence with the Syrians, and a

plot was laid by them to destroy all the Maccabeans in one night. For the execution of this diabolical purpose Bacchides came again into Judea; but the plot was discovered in time by Jonathan, who promptly seized the infamous conspirators and put them to death.

This brought upon him the exasperated Bacchides and his armed force; and Jonathan not being able to withstand them fled to a place in the wilderness called Bethbasi, which he had previously fortified, and in that place he successfully sustained his position against the besieging party. Bacchides felt so enraged at his unsuccessful attempts to subjugate Jonathan or reduce his stronghold, that he turned round upon those adversaries who had brought him into Judea, and slew them; and after making peace with Jonathan and exchanging prisoners, swore that he would never more return to molest the land. So Jonathan settled at Mackmash, about nine miles from Jerusalem, where he administered the laws, and pursued the work of religious reformation.

Soon after the return of Bacchides another infamous troubler rose up, but eventually his audacious conduct proved advantageous to the interest of Jonathan. The Syrian kingdom was terribly agitated by Alexander Balas, who raised a force professedly under the protection of the Roman Senate, came into Palestine, and laid claim to the Syrian throne. This impostor was so rapid and successful in his movements that he caused himself to be proclaimed king before Demetrius had time to oppose him. But Demetrius being aroused

left his castle, where he had been living in indolence and luxury, and adopted measures of defence to the utmost extent of his ability.

It may seem strange that such a manifest impostor as Balas should, by any means, gain the sanction and support of the Roman Senate, for he was a young man of mean origin, and had no claim whatever to the Syrian Crown. All this the senators well knew, but being disgusted with Demetrius they furthered the plans of Balas, and made a decree in his favour, and at least held out some prospect of assistance, if needed.

The dispute between Demetrius and this pretender resulted in some advantage to Jonathan and the Maccabees; for both parties knowing Jonathan to be a valiant and faithful man, and that he had great influence in Judea, were very anxious to secure his assistance and co-operation, and for the accomplishment of their respective ends they made him offers of benefits and rewards. Demetrius immediately appointed him "the king's general in Judea," and sent a letter commanding him to deliver up all the hostages seized by Bacchides. Jonathan, of course, lost no time in complying with these agreeable orders. He removed to Jerusalem, and commenced to restore the fortifications of the city and temple; and his adherents, seeing his power and authority, rapidly increased.

Alexander, hearing of what Demetrius had done to gain the adherence and assistance of Jonathan, made him proposals of still greater advantage. He promised

him the office of high priest, and the high sounding title of "the king's friend." He also sent him a purple robe and a crown of gold as a testimonial of this grant. And at the feast of tabernacles, which soon followed, Jonathan put on his pontifical robes and officiated; after the office had been vacant for seven years from the death of Alcimus.

These two competitors for the Syrian Crown seemed to regard Jonathan as a prize who was to be obtained by the highest bidder; Demetrius, therefore, rather than lose this valuable prize, bade again. He offered him all that Alexander had offered, with the addition of many extraordinary grants and privileges both to himself and his people, provided he would declare in his favour and come to his assistance. But notwithstanding these munificent offers, Jonathan, knowing the deceitfulness of Demetrius, declared in favour of Alexander, who soon turned out to be not only an impostor but a licentious and ungrateful wretch. Jonathan, however, having given his word to support him, and knowing he could not be worse than Demetrius, was faithful to his engagement; and it is only right to remark that Alexander, whatever his general character might be, stood by Jonathan, and conferred great honours upon him. For when Alexander celebrated his nuptials with the daughter of the sovereign of Egypt, at Plelemaia, Jonathan was not only invited to the wedding, but at the marriage feast there was allotted to him one of the chief seats; and the newly-made king publicly expressed

his high opinion of his friend, the Maccabean prince and high priest of Jerusalem.

Jonathan was satisfied with the conduct of Balas, so far, that he manifested his gratitude by affording him all possible assistance to subdue his enemies. Hence, when one Apollonius, a Syrian general (there being several of that name mentioned in history), revolted from Alexander, and took possession of Joppa and Azotus, Jonathan went out against him and captured the cities, which formed an important part of the rebel general's territory. As an acknowledgment of his services, Alexander sent him a buckle of gold, such as were worn only by the royal family, and also gave him the city of Ekron, with its territory. Alexander, whatever he might be, had sufficient sagacity to prize a valuable friend, while the other Syrian kings, generally speaking, had not.

We may just remark that Apollonius, who revolted from Alexander, was instigated to this act by Demetrius, the son of Demetrius Soter, whom Alexander disinherited. This young prince (Demetrius) now asserted his right to the Syrian crown, and he employed Apollonius, as a matter of policy, first to reduce the power of Jonathan; for such was the power and heroism of these Maccabean Hebrews that all these contending parties seemed to dread their opposition. As the young Demetrius knew that he could not by any means, in the position in which he was then placed, win Jonathan over to espouse his cause, he resorted

to this method of reducing his power, which scheme proved successful.

Such was the lewd and loathsome conduct of Alexander, after he obtained possession of the Syrian throne, that he totally neglected all the duties of government, and left them to the administration of his particular favourite, Ammonius, who was tyrannical and cruel, whereby he soon made both himself and his royal master odious to all the people, whereupon they again turned round and supported the claims of Demetrius. This obliged Alexander to call in the aid of Ptolemy Philometer, king of Egypt, whose daughter he had married. This Egyptian sovereign marched into Palestine with a great army, for the purpose of assisting his son-in-law to repel his rival, and Jonathan met him at Joppa. But strange to say, when Ptolemy arrived, Ammonius, who had managed the affairs of the kingdom under Alexander, laid a snare for Ptolemy's life, under the pretext that he had come to serve his own interest and seize the kingdom for himself, rather than to sustain Alexander. Such was the jealousy and lack of confidence existing among these heathen governors in those times.

Ptolemy being informed of the design of Ammonius, demanded that the traitor should be delivered up to him, which Alexander refused to do. This led Ptolemy to the conclusion that Alexander was a party to the conspiracy; he therefore took his daughter from him and gave her to Demetrius, with whom he forthwith made a league to assist him in the restoration of his

father's kingdom, regarding him as the rightful heir. And it appears the Antiochians were ready for this change, for they instantly rose in a tumult against Alexander and Ammonius. Demetrius was placed on the throne, and the people declared him their king. Ammonius, who was attempting to escape in the attire of a female, was detected and slain. Alexander, the dethroned usurper, escaped to Cilica, where he succeeded in collecting a force, came to the country round Antioch, and wasted it with sword and fire. This brought the two armies into battle, in which Alexander was totally vanquished, and fled from the field with 500 of his troops to Zabdiel, an Arabian prince; but instead of finding succour, as he expected, he was slain, and his head was carried to Ptolemy, who was pleased at the sight; but his joy did not continue long, for having received a dangerous wound in the battle, he died in a few days. Thus, Alexander, the usurper, and Ptolemy Philometer, the sovereign of Egypt, both ended their lives together. Demetrius succeeded, as king of Syria, by virtue of this victory, and from that time he was called Nicator, viz., the Conqueror.



CHAPTER XV.

The Reign of Jonathan and his Character.



Jonathan lays siege to the heathen fortress of Acra—He is summoned by Demetrius to give an account of his conduct—Comes to an agreement with Demetrius—Tryphon strives to obtain the Syrian crown—Makes use of Antiochus, the son of Alexander Balas, to accomplish his design—The Antiochians rise in rebellion against Demetrius—Jonathan agrees to assist Demetrius on condition he will withdraw his forces from Acra—3,000 Maccabeans sent to assist Demetrius; slay 20,000 Antiochians; and after subduing the insurgents kill 100,000 of the inhabitants—Demetrius breaks his promise to Jonathan—Demands of Jonathan extra taxation—Demetrius again in trouble with Tryphon—Demetrius defeated and flees to Seleucia—Antiochus Balas made king and deified—Called Theos—Jonathan has to contend with the forces of Demetrius that still remained in Cœlo-Syria and Phœnicia—Jonathan's successful campaigns—Fortifies the country of Judea—Marches against Tryphon with 40,000 troops, and forces him to desist operations—Entrapped by Tryphon and kept prisoner—Tryphon's policy with Simon—Tryphon obliged to retire into winter quarters, carries Jonathan with him into the land of Gilead and puts him to death—He also puts Antiochus to death and seizes the Syrian crown—Simon erects a sepulchral monument at Modin—The general character of Jonathan.



WHILE the revolutions described in the preceding chapter were taking place at Antioch, in relation to the sovereign authority of Syria,

Judea was comparatively at rest; therefore Jonathan deemed it a favourable opportunity to besiege the heathen fortress which the enemies of the Maccabeans held near Jerusalem, and who had for a long time caused so much trouble and suffering to the faithful Jews. He accordingly went against it with an army and engines of war, with a design to either take it or destroy the garrison. The besieged immediately applied to Demetrius for assistance, who came to Ptolemais and summoned Jonathan to meet him to give an account of his conduct in relation to this matter. Jonathan obeyed the king, but before leaving Jerusalem he gave orders for the siege still to go on. He took with him some of the priests and elders of the land, and also many valuable presents, by which means he mollified the king's vengeful intentions, and so far secured his favour that he not only rejected all accusations against him, but also conferred upon him great honour and many privileges. He confirmed him in the pontifical office and admitted him to a chief place among his friends, agreed to transfer several places which belonged to Samaria to Judea, and also to free the territory under his government from all taxes and tributes whatsoever, for the sum of three hundred talents.

The young king returned to Antioch, but, being rash and inexperienced, soon got into fresh troubles; and being much disliked by many of his subjects, a man named Diodotus, who had formerly served under Alexander Balas as governor of Antioch, and who was afterwards called Tryphon, thought this a favourable

opportunity to arrange means to put the crown on his own head. He did not, however, openly avow his object at first, which was subsequently made manifest, as the reader will see, by a series of plans and developments. He got up a movement under the pretext of placing the son of Alexander on the throne. In the first place he went to Zabdiel, the Arabian king, who had the care of Antiochus, the son of Alexander, and laid before him the state of affairs in Syria, suggesting at the same time that it was a favourable opportunity to recover for Antiochus his father's kingdom, and that if the youth was put into his hands he would secure this advantage for him. Zabdiel did not seem to like the project, but ultimately yielded to the importunities of the crafty traitor, and delivered to him Antiochus. Tryphon, having got his tool in possession, soon began to make manifest his real design, which was first to claim the crown for the pretended heir, whose father had never any legal right to the kingdom, and then by some means put away the youth and wear the crown himself.

We must here notice that while Tryphon was prosecuting his scheme, and the Antiochians embarrassing Demetrius with tumults and seditions, Jonathan was carrying on the siege of Acra, the heathen fortress at Jerusalem, and being hardly pressed, and finding but little success, he sent an embassy to Demetrius, to desire him to withdraw his garrison. Demetrius agreed to do so, on condition that Jonathan would first send him some forces to put down the mutineers at Antioch.

Jonathan fell in with the arrangement, and immediately despatched 3,000 of his men for this purpose. Soon after their arrival they were brought into contact with 20,000 armed Antiochians, who had openly revolted against Demetrius and surrounded his palace with an intention to slay him. The Jews who had come to the assistance of the besieged king fell on the insurgents with fire and sword, who, being taken by surprise, were put to flight or slain. The Jews then burnt a great part of the city and killed 100,000 of its inhabitants, on which the tumult ceased, and those who were left alive sued for mercy. It may at the first glance seem rather surprising, and almost incredible, that 3000 Jewish troops could overpower and rout 20,000 of the insurgents, and afterwards destroy the city and its numerous inhabitants to such a large extent. But the probability is that the insurgents were not under proper discipline, and were taken by surprise by the Jewish force, which would no doubt consist of the bravest men whom Jonathan could select, and in this expedition they would be actuated by feelings of retaliation and vengeance. They remembered what the Antiochians had done in Judea, and especially in Jerusalem, during the tyrannical reigns of their former kings, and they seemed glad of the opportunity of inflicting upon these enemies retributive justice for their repeated offences and cruel conduct, and having done so they returned to Jerusalem with the spoil of their conquests; but they had done perhaps much more than the king desired or expected. They not only saved his life and slew his enemies, but

almost ruined the royal city. Demetrius, either on this account or for some other reason, never performed his promise to Jonathan. Most likely thinking he should never more require the assistance of the Jews, he broke the engagement which he made with Jonathan at Ptolemais, though he had received the 300 talents according to stipulation for the redemption of tolls and tributes. Though Jonathan had been honourable in adhering to all his engagements, the young tyrant now turns round upon the venerable pontiff, and unrighteously demands to the utmost rigour the former taxations (the tolls and tributes which Jonathan had redeemed), and threatened that if his demand was not complied with he would visit him and compel him by force of arms. Such ingratitude, duplicity, and unfaithfulness totally alienated the Jews from Demetrius, and they never afterwards could place any confidence in him.

The troubles of Demetrius were not ended with the subjugation of the Antiochian insurgents, and he soon found that he had other work to do than to make war with the Jews to compel their compliance with his unjust demands. Tryphon, having obtained from Zabdiel the son of Alexander, brought him into Syria, and demanded for him the crown of the kingdom. And as nearly all the people had taken a dislike to Demetrius on account of his cruelty, they flocked round the standard of the pretender and declared him king, marched under his banner against the enfeebled forces of Demetrius and vanquished them. The defeated king fled to Seleucia, leaving behind him his property. The Syrians, in their

enthusiasm, not only placed Antiochus Balas upon the throne, but they deified him, for they gave him the name of *Theos* (or God). This change at Antioch brought Jonathan into collision with the forces of Demetrius, which he still held in Coelo-Syria and Phœnecia. These forces united and invaded Galilee. Their reason for so doing was because Jonathan had embraced the interest of Antiochus, who had supplanted Demetrius. But this was almost certain to be the case, considering the unjust treatment which Jonathan had received from Demetrius; and besides this, Antiochus had conferred upon him, or rather confirmed to him, all the honours and privileges promised by Demetrius, with several additional marks of friendship and honour. Therefore Jonathan was justifiable in adopting his arrangements of friendship with Antiochus. What else could he do under the peculiar circumstances in which the unfaithfulness of Demetrius had placed him?

Jonathan met these forces of Demetrius on several occasions and defeated them. The last time they met with these enemies was on the utmost confines of Canaan, where the two armies had encamped. The enemy intended to storm the camp of Jonathan in the night, but he took care to be in readiness for them, which discovering on their approach, they were disappointed, returned to their camps, kindled their fires to deceive Jonathan, and then fled off in the night. The Jews pursued them as far as the river Eleutherus without overtaking them, and then marched through the

Arab country, where Demetrius had a party: these Jonathan smote, and then returned by the way of Damascus. While Jonathan was thus employed in routing the enemy beyond the Jordan, Simon led out a strong force against the Philistines, whom he subdued. He also took Joppa, where was placed a strong garrison for defence.

The Maccabeans having thus subdued their enemies, and thinking they had nothing now to fear from Antioch, on returning to Jerusalem they called a national council to consult about repairing and fortifying Jerusalem and other fortresses in the land, so that they might be the better able to withstand the encroachments of any enemy that might come against them. This method was adopted, and thereby the whole country became well fortified; but only just in time to contend with the wicked and deceitful Tryphon, who thought the time had now arrived for him to destroy the young king and seize the Syrian crown for himself. But knowing that Jonathan would never countenance such villany, he resolved to dispatch him out of the way. He therefore marched a great army into Judea, in order to get Jonathan into his possession or to slay him in battle. On his arrival at Bethsan the heroic Maccabean general met him with 40,000 men. Tryphon, on seeing such an army, durst not risk an engagement, and therefore met Jonathan with flattering words and lying lips. He pretended that he had only come to consult with him about their common interest, and to put Ptolemais into his hands, which he intended fully to resign to him.

By these fair pretences he persuaded the Hebrew general to send away his army, except 1,000 men, whom he took with him in company. These the cruel deceiver conducted to Ptolemais, in expectation that the city would be delivered to them; but Jonathan had no sooner entered within its gates than they were closed against his men; thus he was taken prisoner. Tryphon having thus entrapped the chief general of the Jewish army, advanced from Ptolemais into Judea to invade the land, carrying Jonathan with him as a prisoner. It seems rather surprising that Jonathan, with his experience and skill, should be caught in this snare by his wily foe, seeing he had so repeatedly been deceived by the Syrian generals; and the conduct of Tryphon throughout ought to have put him on his guard.

The Syrian army, on approaching Jerusalem, were met by Simon with a powerful force. The infamous traitor was again afraid to engage in battle, and therefore had recourse to his former method of deception. He pretended that he had made a prisoner of Jonathan to secure the payment of a debt of 100 talents, which was owing to the Syrian king; and provided that sum was paid he would deliver him up to his brother. Simon doubted his word, but for the sake of satisfying the people and releasing his brother, if possible, he too hastily complied, for Tryphon failed to perform his promise, and still prosecuted the invasion, which Simon successfully resisted. Tryphon was therefore at length obliged to retire into winter quarters. On coming to Bascama, in the land of Gilead, he put Jonathan to

death, after which he attempted to accomplish his ultimate designs. He caused Antiochus to be put to death, and then pretended he had suddenly died of the stone, forthwith seized the crown and proclaimed himself king of Syria in his stead.

When Simon heard that his brother was murdered, and interred at Bascama, he sent for his body, and re-buried him in the sepulchre of his father at Modin, where he afterwards erected a magnificent monument of white marble, of great height, so that it was visible at sea, and for a long time served as a landmark for mariners. Josephus speaks of this monument existing in his day, and Eusebius says it continued to exist for 200 years after the time of the Jewish historian. Jonathan was, like his brother Judas, a brave and valiant man, upright and honourable in his general transactions. His noble conduct gained the admiration of the Roman senators, who lamented his death, and readily acknowledged Simon as his successor. He was a true patriot, and as such did much and suffered much for the benefit of his country, for the restoration of its religious privileges, and for the re-establishment of its religious duties.



CHAPTER XVI.

The Reign of Simon the Maccabean.



Tryphon marches towards Jerusalem, but is obliged to retreat—Simon elected high priest and chief commander—Sanctioned by the Roman Senate—Ratification of alliance by the Romans—The Romans refuse to acknowledge Tryphon—The Tryphonians destroyed by an unnatural tide—The army of Antiochus, son of Demetrius Soter, brought against the Tryphonians—Tryphon obliged to retreat to Dora, where he was put to death—Antiochus Sidetes takes possession of the Syrian kingdom—The Syrian king confirms the appointment of Simon to the twofold office of high priest and chief governor of Judea with the title of Prince—Reflections on the struggles of the Maccabeans—The king of Syria projects a scheme to destroy the independency of Simon—Simon refuses to comply with the demands of the Syrian king—Cendebeüs sent with an army to fight against Simon—Judas and John, sons of Simon, meet the invaders at Modin, and overthrow Cendebeüs in battle, after which they return to Jerusalem—The Jews had rest for three years—The lamentable death of Simon, murdered by Ptolemy, his son-in-law—Ptolemy lays a plan to take away the life of John, the son of Simon, but is defeated.



HE Jews on hearing of the murder of Jonathan, by the command of Tryphon, were thrown into great consternation. They lost by his

death a brave and skilful general, and a faithful religious instructor; at a time, too, when they greatly needed stimulation to make a most vigorous resistance against the encroachments of one of the most unprincipled and remorseless ruffians that ever rose to commanding authority.

Tryphon, on being routed by Simon in his expedition against Jerusalem, strengthened his forces, and was returning with an intention to relieve the Syrian garrison at Jerusalem, and then either compel the Jews to submit to such terms as he might please to dictate, or destroy the city; but he was arrested in his counter-march and hostile intentions by a heavy fall of snow, which obliged him to hastily retreat. This event, however, was sufficient to give the Jews an idea of his feelings and purposes towards them. Simon, who was the only son of the famous Mattathias, delivered to them an eloquent and inspiring address, after which he was elected, amidst the acclamations of the people, their high priest and commander. That appointment was also sanctioned by the Roman Senate, who also renewed its former leagues made with Judas and Jonathan. This ratification of alliance was written on tables of brass, and was carried by the Jewish ambassadors to Jerusalem, who, on their return from Rome, went to Lacedemonia and other allies of the Jews, in the name of Simon, and renewed in like manner all former leagues with them. These facts prove that the Jewish nation at that time was rising in national

strength and importance in the estimation of foreign powers.

With respect to Tryphon, who had purposed to crush and enslave the Jews, matters went on otherwise. The Romans refused to acknowledge him as the rightful sovereign of Syria. Soon after he had usurped the crown he sent an embassy to Rome with a present of a golden image of victory of great value, hoping to obtain in return for this gift an expression of the Senate's approval of his sovereignty; but the Romans blighted his expectations, for on receiving the image they ordered to be engraven on it the name of Antiochus (son of Alexander), whom Tryphon had murdered, as though he had been the donor of it. This, of course, was a significant disapproval of the conduct of the usurper; and his subsequent career was short and inglorious. It is true that he gained a victory over Sarpedon, one of Demetrius' captains, near the city of Ptolemais; but on the Tryphonians returning to the city, after pursuing the vanquished troops, they were overwhelmed with a sudden and unnatural tide, and many of them were drowned. For a time Tryphon retained part of the kingdom, while Demetrius was engaged against the Parthians, who made him prisoner; after which Antiochus, second son of Demetrius Soter, who was at Rhodes, being invited by Cleopatra, wife of Demetrius, took upon himself the title of king of Syria, and having landed in Syria with an army of mercenaries, whom he had hired in Greece, Lesser Asia, and the Isles, and having married Cleopatra, their forces

were united for the purpose of overthrowing the usurper. Many of the Tryphonians, being weary of their tyrannical master, went over in a body to Antiochus, so that before he came to a general engagement with Tryphon he was able to bring into the field 120,000 foot and 8,000 horse. Before this overwhelming force Tryphon could not keep the field, and was obliged therefore to retreat for refuge. He led his discomfited army to Dora, a city in Phœnicia, where, being besieged by Antiochus both by sea and land, and finding the resources of the place insufficient to enable him to sustain a siege, he made his escape to Apamia, his native city, where he was taken and put to death. Thus ended the infamous career of this guilty rebel and cruel tyrant, who, a short time before, had vowed his vengeance against the Jews, and threatened to annihilate the whole nation.

Antiochus Sidetes (on the downfall of this usurper) came into full possession of his father's kingdom; his eldest brother, as we have noticed, being made prisoner. While the two sons of Demetrius Soter, and Tryphon, were contending for the Syrian crown, the zealous and unremitting attention of Simon, aided by a number of his people's representatives, were devising the most prudent schemes to secure the happiness and prosperity of the Jewish nation. At a general assembly, convened at Jerusalem, it was unanimously agreed that the supreme government of the nation, as well as the high priesthood, should be conferred on Simon, and settled both on him and his posterity after him. This was not

only a national confirmation of the grant of Demetrius, the Syrian king, but also an agreement that the descendants, or lineal heirs of Simon, should hold these supreme offices, and a record was made to that effect, on which was recited the good deeds of Simon and his family in relation to what had been done for the nation and people. A copy of this record was engraven on brass and placed in the sanctuary, the original being laid in the sacred archives belonging to the treasury of the temple. From this time Simon bore the title of prince, and all public acts were published in his name; and after him the dignities of *prince* and *high priest* descended together to his posterity for several generations. His successors have been called by historians, "the Asmonean princes," for the reasons before assigned. This transaction took place B. C. 142, and about twenty-five years after the rise of the Maccabeans. When we look at the origin, the success, and triumphs of the Maccabean struggles for liberty, we cannot but feel astonished. There is nothing to be compared to it in either ancient or modern history. It originated in zeal for religion and pure patriotism, with a single family, in deeds of noble daring, and their brilliant actions and success is without a parallel, and altogether of a different character from those actions which have constituted the fame and glory of renowned heroes generally. The Maccabeans were not a family of princes who could command a powerful army into the field at once, or of immense wealth to hire mercenaries to fight their battles, but the family of a priest belonging to a town of

but little notoriety (Modin), of which but little is known. But under them (a father and five sons, whose conduct we have already noticed) the Hebrew nation, which had been oppressed and down trodden by the heathen, was again raised to independency and power, and continued to prosper during three kings' reigns, until Jerusalem was overthrown by Pompey, and Herod the Great, an Idumean nobleman, placed on the throne.

Though Simon was now raised to the highest and most dignified position to which his nation could elevate him, and he had succeeded in forming an alliance with the most powerful nation then in existence, his future career was not free from trouble. The newly-elected Syrian king soon found a pretext to annoy him, and projected schemes to destroy his independency. It will be necessary here just to remark that the letters sent by the Romans to the Syrian king, in which Simon was acknowledged by them as the supreme governor of Judea, were not addressed to either Tryphon or Antiochus Sidetis, but to Demetrius, who was then a prisoner in Parthia, he being still acknowledged as the rightful sovereign, and consequently Antiochus had no regard for such letters, as they were not written to him. Therefore as soon as he had driven Tryphon out of the field, and secured his death, he raised a quarrel with Simon, and attempted to rescind all that had been formerly granted or promised. But Simon had been accustomed to such kind of treatment from the Syrian princes, and consequently knew how to contend with

him. In the first place Antiochus went to Athenobius, one of his friends, to demand the restoration of Gazara, Joppa, and the fortress of Acra, with several other places then held by Simon, which he claimed as belonging to Syria, or else five hundred talents in lieu of them, and five hundred talents more for the damage that was done by the Jews within the borders of his other dominions. Simon refused to comply with these demands, but offered to pay one hundred talents for Gazara and Joppa. Athenobius, on receiving this answer, turned away in a rage, and reported to the king the pomp and grandeur of Simon's household, and said he was living in all respects in the same manner of splendour and glory as other princes; knowing this representation would stir up the king to make war against him, which was the case.

Cendebarus, the governor of the sea coast of Palestine, was sent with an army of considerable strength to fight against Simon. He marched his forces into Judea, and fortified Kedron, where he placed a part of his army, and from thence began to make inroads upon the Jews, and to kill and plunder and commit all manner of hostilities in the land. John, the son of Simon, who lived at Gazara, went to Jerusalem to inform his father of these particulars, who immediately sent an army of 20,000 foot and some cavalry to resist these invaders. Simon now being broken with age committed the command of the army to his two sons, Judas and John. The first night they encamped at Modin, where the war with the Syrians commenced,

and where their heroic grandfather, Mattathias, struck the first blow to knock off the tyrants' chains. During that night we may suppose these young men would call to mind the valour and victories of bye-gone days. In the morning they sallied forth with their army against the forces of Cendebarus, and overthrew the enemy with a loss of 2,000 of his men, and the rest fled from the battle field discomfited, some to their strongholds at Kedron, and others to Azotus. Judas being wounded in this battle was obliged to stay behind, but John closely pursued the enemy till he came to Azotus, when he took the fortress and tower of defence and burnt them. Both brothers returned in triumph to Jerusalem, and the Jews had rest from war for about three years, and realised the inestimable benefits of Simon's judicious administration.

The manner in which this great and good man closed his brilliant career is most lamentable. While making a tour through the country for the purpose of regulating public affairs, in company with two of his sons, Judas and Mattathias, he came to Jericho, where he fell a victim to one of the most diabolical plots which has ever darkened the annals of murder. Ptolemy, the son of Abulus, who had married one of Simon's daughters, and was governor of the city, invited him to come to the castle which he had built in the neighbourhood, to partake of an entertainment which he had professedly provided for him and his sons. Simon, not suspecting any evil design, accepted the invitation. But this flagitious wretch, in concert with Antiochus, had laid a plan to

usurp the government of Judea for himself, by the destruction of Simon and his sons, and deeming this a favourable opportunity of putting his bloody design into execution, he had his mercenary assassins concealed in the castle, and after the entertainment, or in the midst of the feast, Simon and all who attended him at the banquet were assassinated. This guilty parricide moreover sent a party of murderous ruffians to Gazara, where John, the son of the murdered pontiff, was residing, to slay him also; and addressed letters to the commanders of the army to come over to him, promising them rich rewards if they would favour his design. But John, having received information of what had taken place at Jericho, and the murderous transactions at the castle of Docus, prepared to meet the assassins and cut them off as soon as they approached Gazara; he also adopted measures to avenge the blood of his father on the head of the execrable traitor.





CHAPTER XVII.

John Hyrcanus and the events of his life.



John, called Hyrcanus, is constituted prince and made high priest—He marches against the fortress where his father had been murdered—The brutal stratagem of Ptolemy—Ptolemy escapes to Zeno—Antiochus again invades Judea—The dreadful siege of Jerusalem by Antiochus—The shameful conduct of Hyrcanus during the siege, a blot on his character—The gracious conduct of Antiochus—Terms of peace agreed upon—Antiochus breaks up his siege camps and withdraws from Judea—Some accounts of Josephus and Prideaux examined respecting the Sepulchre of David.



AFTER John, called Hyrcanus, had delivered himself from his enemies by slaying those who were engaged by Ptolemy to take away his life, he hastened to Jerusalem to secure it and the temple against those whom the traitor had sent to seize them. On his arrival he was forthwith constituted prince and high priest in the place of his father; and being thus invested with legal authority, he commenced active operations to provide for the security and peace of the country at large. Ptolemy, as we have before observed, was secretly in league with the king of Syria,

whose designs were to cut off Hyrcanus, bring Judea under the governorship of Ptolemy, and place Judea again under tribute to the Syrian king. It was therefore necessary that prompt and decisive measures should be adopted by Hyrcanus to frustrate these designs, and to overthrow the schemes adopted for their accomplishment. He therefore marched his forces against the fortress of the murderer, near Jericho, and commenced a regular siege; which no doubt would soon have compelled a surrender if the artful murderer had not had recourse to an ingenious and brutal stratagem. The mother and two brothers of Hyrcanus were prisoners in the castle, whom Ptolemy brought upon the ramparts, in sight of the besiegers, "and threatened to whip them to death" if the siege continued. Josephus says, "Ptolemy brought them upon the wall and tormented them in the sight of all, and threatened that he would throw them down headlong unless Hyrcanus would leave off the siege." His mother notwithstanding urged him to press the siege and avenge the blood of him who was most dear to her; but when Hyrcanus saw how she was tormented his courage failed him, so he ceased operations. And the Sabbatic year being at hand, on which the Jews rested from war, Ptolemy, after putting to death the mother and her two sons, made his escape to Zeno, called Cotylas, who is designated "The tyrant of Philadelphia." History furnishes no further account of this Ptolemy. He must have been a most disgraceful wretch, and it is thought he was assassinated in obscurity. The words of Zophar,

where he describes the portion of the wicked man, we think may be applied to this infamous parricidal traitor, "He shall flee from the iron weapon, and the bow of steel shall strike him through ; terrors are upon him, a fire not blown shall consume him ; the heavens shall reveal his iniquity, and the earth shall rise up against him." Surely both heaven and earth are against such monsters of iniquity, and hell is ever ready to receive them. It is not unlikely, as Prideaux remarks, that the king of Syria, being disappointed and displeased with Ptolemy, slew him because he was unsuccessful in carrying out the concerted schemes.

Though Ptolemy was defeated, the troubles of Hyrcanus, occasioned by the plot, continued, and for some time required all his sagacity and energy to save the nation from again being subject to the Syrian yoke. Antiochus, who anticipated considerable advantage from the success of Ptolemy, now turned his thoughts on revenge, and without delay came into Judea with an irresistible army, for the purpose of accomplishing by force what Ptolemy had failed to do by intrigue and conspiracy. Such was the overwhelming force of Antiochus, when he came to invade the land, that Hyrcanus found it impossible to keep the field ; he therefore very prudently retired to Jerusalem. When the Syrian army had overrun the country and laid it waste, they besieged the capital with the whole army, divided into seven encampments, and thereby enclosed the entire city. The Jews, thus circumvallated, were thrown entirely upon their own internal resources, being

blockaded from all communication with the surrounding country. But the city being well fortified, and as well garrisoned, and also plentifully stored with provisions, the enemy, notwithstanding his numerical strength, could make but very little progress. The Syrians therefore began to devise other means. "On the north side of the city the height of the wall was only on a level with the outer ground." It appears the ground gradually rose from the base of the wall until it reached an elevation equal to the top, but at what distance we cannot say. Josephus simply says "the outward ground," but he cannot mean the ground immediately joining the wall; for if so the defence would have been comparatively useless, all the advantage being a perpendicular rise in the inside from the base to the top of the wall. On the elevated ground outside the wall the Syrians raised one hundred towers, of three stories high, on which were placed soldiers. They also cut a double ditch, deep and wide, thinking that these trenches and ramparts would more effectually confine the besieged, and if they attempted to escape, or do them mischief by means of sorties, they would destroy them. But notwithstanding this the Jews, being so skilful and dextrous in the art of defence, continued to make frequent sallies, to inflict serious damage upon the enemy, and then retire, with amazing rapidity, within their own fortifications. Hyrcanus foreseeing that if the siege was protracted provisions would necessarily run short, separated the useless part of the population from the strong and active, and turned the

feeble and useless out of the city, perhaps thinking the enemy would allow them to wander off in the country, but this was very unlikely. These feeble outcasts therefore had to wander about between the walls of the city and the trenches of the enemy until they died, in the most miserable condition of hunger, thirst, and starvation. These circumstances are related by Josephus and several other historians without any comment, or expressions of disapproval. And if our object was simply to record historical facts, without any reflections and expressions of opinion thereon, we might allow this conduct to pass without any condemnation or censure. But we cannot forbear remarking that in our opinion, in reference to the particulars under review, the conduct of Hyrcanus seems to be tarnished with cruelty, and it is surprising that a man of his character should have recourse to measures so revolting. Much is said by way of condemning the Babylonish rebels when they were besieged by Darius Hystaspes, and we think very justly so, because they put to death such as were unable to take any part in defending the city, and we think Hyrcanus was equally censurable for turning the helpless Jews out of the city to suffer and die between the walls and trenches in sight of the enemy; and most likely many of them were slain in trying to make their escape into the country. At length the miserable condition of these feeble outcasts excited the compassion of the people, and as many as remained alive were received again into the city, but whether by order of the governor, or being urged by sympathy and their own natural

and sudden impulse, in spite of official orders to the contrary, we are nowhere informed ; most likely the latter was the case, and Hyrcanus submitted through fear of a rebellion.

The siege went on till the time arrived for the Jewish feast of tabernacles, which led to negotiation and terms of peace. On the approach of that holy time, Hyrcanus sent to Antiochus to request him to grant a truce during the festival, which he not only readily granted but sent them provision for the sacrifices to be offered. The Jews were so well pleased with his benignity and unexpected generosity that they were encouraged to negotiate terms of peace. Antiochus received their message kindly, and a treaty commenced, which speedily terminated in peace. This was done in the ninth month after the death of Simon. It is only right to say that the conduct of the Syrian king, in negotiating terms of peace, was characterised by marks of honour, equity, and a disposition to befriend the Jews in reference to their religious privileges, and was so much to the satisfaction of the Jews that they designated him, Antiochus the Pious, to denote their approval of his conduct, in contradistinction to the conduct of Antiochus Epiphanes, who when he had taken the city offered swine upon the altar, and sprinkled the temple and the holy place with the broth of their flesh, in order to pollute them, to presumptuously violate the laws of the Jews, and to insult the God of Israel. We may further remark that when Antiochus expressed his willingness to come to terms of peace, he was strongly

urged by his own people, the Syrians, to make use of that opportunity of utterly destroying the city, and exterminating the whole Jewish nation, assigning reasons why, in their opinion, the Jews deserved destruction, viz., because in their religious customs and manners they differed from all other nations, and refrained from all communication with those who were not of their own nation. Josephus says, "It was entirely owing to the generosity and clemency of Antiochus that the whole nation of the Jews were not at this time totally cut off, and utterly destroyed." Such had been the pressure of the siege, and its long continuance, that they were brought to the last extremity, through want of provisions. The stores of the city were nearly all exhausted, and this was well known in the besiegers' camp. Therefore, though Antiochus seemed to be rather oppressive in his demands, all things considered, it must be acknowledged that he acted towards them with unusual generosity and forbearance. He spared the city when he had it in his power to reduce it to a heap of ruins, and he assisted them to keep the holy festival when he could have prevented them.

On making peace Antiochus required that the besieged should comply with the following terms:—1st, deliver up their arms; 2nd, pay tribute for Joppa and the other cities which bordered upon Judea; 3rd, allow the fortress near Jerusalem to be rebuilt, and garrisoned with Syrian soldiers; 4th, dismantle the walls of the city. Hyrcanus would not agree to have the heathen

fortress rebuilt, as this had formerly been the cause of so much mischief and damage to the Jews in the days of Judas, Jonathan, and his father, but he offered the king five hundred talents in lieu thereof. Antiochus accepted these conditions, and terms of peace were immediately executed.

Three hundred talents of the money were laid down, and security given for the remainder in the usual way, by delivering up hostages, one of whom was the brother of Hyrcanus. After lowering the fortifications of the city, Antiochus broke up his siege camps and departed in peace. Josephus goes on to relate a circumstance, in connection with the settlement of this peace, which we think cannot be received as correct, at any rate, it requires a little consideration. He says, "Hyrcanus opened the sepulchre of David, and took out of it three hundred talents." We presume he means, to turn it over to Antiochus, as above stated. This is at least inferential, though he does not say what Prideaux imputes to him, "To find money for this, and other occasions of the government, his brother opened the sepulchre of David." It is worthy of notice that the Jewish historian makes a similar statement, in reference to Herod the Great taking great treasures out of the same sepulchre. Prideaux regards both these stories as being very improbable, on which subject he offers several appropriate observations. He supposes that if such treasures had really been deposited in the sepulchre of David, they would not have been allowed to remain safe from rifle and violation for nine hundred years, for in several

instances the Jewish kings, in order to relieve the exigencies of the state, made use of the gold of the temple; and one of their kings, viz., Ahaz, plundered the temple of its precious metals and melted them down into money for common use. He then showed the temple had been utterly destroyed, and also the city by the Babylonians, and that it is reasonable to suppose this vast treasure would not remain under the rubbish and ruins secure and untouched. He then refers to the conduct of Antiochus Epiphanes, who plundered the temple after it was rebuilt. He concludes that such an amount of treasure would not have remained secure under such circumstances, until the time of Hyrcanus. He next describes the sepulchres of David and the kings of his lineage, to show that the treasures laid in them would be exposed to the view of those who entered into the vaults, which were cut out of marble rocks, where there was no earth to cover them, and he concludes his remarks on this subject as follows:—"If there be any foundation of truth in this matter, I can only resolve it into this, that several rich men who feared Herod's rapacity hid their treasures in those vaults, thinking that they would be there best secured from it; and this crafty tyrant, having gotten notice of it, seized what was there deposited, as if it had been king David's treasure, and then trumped up this story of Hyrcanus to screen himself from censure, by the example of so good and great a man; but it is most likely that both parts of the story are mere fiction, picked up by Josephus without any ground of truth, as are also some other particulars in his history."

We don't feel free to dismiss this subject without just remarking, if the treasures deposited in David's sepulchre were so readily discovered, as stated by the learned Dean, it is scarcely probable that the rich men in the days of Herod would carry their treasures there for safety, we may therefore readily dispense with that supposition, and we wonder that Prideux should suppose such a thing as probable. It seems more reasonable to infer, in the case of Hyrcanus taking money out of the sepulchre of David, that he had first placed it there for safety, under *some additional security*, during the siege, and when he required it to make peace, he brought it out; and as to the case of Herod, we cannot account for his conduct. It is rather too severe in Prideaux to say, "The story is a mere fiction, picked up by Josephus without any ground of truth;" if so, he must not only have been credulous to a fault, but lacking in fidelity.





CHAPTER XVIII.

Maccabean Victories and extension of the Jewish Dominions.

Hyrcanus assists Antiochus in a war against the Parthians—The great army of Antiochus scattered and lost—Demetrius Nicator recovers the Syrian kingdom—Hyrcanus extends his dominion, and frees his nation from all homage to Syria—He conquers Samaria, the Edomites, and Idumeans—Reflections on the social condition of the Jewish nation during the Syrian invasion. Hyrcanus renews his league with the Roman Senate, and obtains great favours—His second embassy to Rome—His second expedition into Samaria, when he fought against the combined forces of the Damascenes, Samaritans, and Egyptians—Remarks on the population of Samaria—The large extent of territory over which Hyrcanus ruled—His troubles with the Pharisees—The general character of John Hyrcanus.

IN the fourth year of the reign of Hyrcanus, we find him accompanying Antiochus in an expedition against the Parthian king, which may be regarded as a proof of their continued friendship. We have before noticed that Demetrius Nicator was made prisoner by the Parthians, and detained in Hyrcania. Antiochus Sidetes, his brother, under pretence of effecting his deliverance, marched with a

powerful army, consisting of 80,000 men well disciplined in war, against Phrahates, king of Parthia, and overthrew him in three battles—recovered Babylonia and Media, and therewith all the rest of those eastern countries, which had formerly been provinces of the Syrian empire ; for the people hearing of his conquests revolted to him, and Phrahates' dominion was therefore reduced to the limits of the original Parthian kingdom. Hyrcanus had a part in these victories, and returned at the end of the year in triumph, but the rest of the army, with the great number of attendants, amounting in all to 400,000 persons, including butlers, cooks, pastry men, confectioners, scullions, musicians, stage-players, and courtesans, were scattered all over the country, to obtain provisions and accommodation for the winter : these were nearly all destroyed ; for the inhabitants being sorely oppressed by them, conspired to cut them all off in one night, and this was really executed, save the few who escaped ; and Antiochus was slain among the rest : “ There scarcely returned a man into Syria of all this vast number to carry the doleful news of this terrible overthrow.” Demetrius, after a long imprisonment, in which he was well treated by the Parthian king, returned into Syria, and on his brother's death again recovered the kingdom.

When Hyrcanus heard of the death of Antiochus, and the disturbed state of affairs in Syria, occasioned thereby, he regarded it as a fit opportunity to enlarge his territories by seizing on several places which he thought ought to belong to his dominion, and also

from this time to raise himself to an independent position. This he successfully accomplished, so that neither he nor his successors were ever after dependent on the Syrian king, but completely free from all homage, tribute or subjection.

Hyrcanus still went on adding to his dominion. He took Shechem, the capital of Samaria, and destroyed the temple which Sanballat erected on Mount Gerizim, and afterward he conquered the Edomites, or Idumeans, and compelled them to embrace the Jewish religion, or else leave the country. How far Hyrcanus was justifiable in these wars, and in compelling the people whom he conquered to embrace the Jewish religion, we cannot safely determine. In some particulars he might have passed the bounds of prudence and the laws of equity, but his design, undoubtedly, was to regain the dominion and territory formerly possessed by David and Solomon, thinking he had a divine right to those possessions, as the grant of God to his forefathers, and that those whom he subdued, should only have the privilege of sojourning in the country on condition that they became proselytes to the Jewish religion; this being necessary to the future tranquillity of the nation, and the well being of themselves. In reference to the social condition of the Jews during that period,—they were so harassed and oppressed by the Syrians, that it must at times have been very distressing. Though the country was rich and prolific in its produce, the perpetual wars were destructive to agricultural industry; and the heavy taxations to which they were subjected, either to sup-

port a defensive war, or to meet the unjust claims of their oppressors, were a regular drain on productive labour, and would necessarily operate so as to deprive the population of much domestic and social comfort. After all, the soil of the country being so excellent and ample in its natural produce, and its pastures so extensive and of so rich a quality, they had many natural advantages. The climate too was mild and salubrious, which would contribute much to their enjoyment. In times of peace no country could be more adapted for the common requirements of social life than the "good and large country of Palestine; a land flowing with milk and honey." Certainly not large geographically, compared with many countries, but as nearly all parts of it yielded abundantly, its produce was large, and suited to supply the wants of its population.

After Hyrcanus had regained possession of the territory he considered legally belonged to his dominion, and wishing to be for ever freed from all obligation to the Syrian king, by the sanction of the Roman senate, which was regarded as the highest authority in the civilized world, he sent an embassy to Rome, with a request to have the league renewed which was made with them by Simon, his father, and also to be delivered from all tribute on account of holding Gazara and Joppa, all of which was agreed to by the senators; and they made null and void all the Syrians had done contrary to the tenor of the league which was made in the days of Simon. They also decreed that the Jews should be made free from all homage, tribute, and other ser-

vices; and moreover, that reparation should be made them by the Syrians for all the damage done to them contrary to what the senate had decreed in their league with Simon; that the Syrian kings should have no right to march their soldiers or armies through the Jewish territories, and that ambassadors should be sent to see all this executed. And, as a further manifestation of the senate's approval of the conduct of Hyrcanus, an order was made that the Jewish ambassadors should have their homeward expenses allowed them out of the public treasury, and that letters should be written to all the confederate states and princes in their way, to give them a safe and honourable passage through their dominions. Nothing could have been more successful than this embassy. The year following another embassy was sent to return thanks for the above mentioned favours, and in acknowledgment thereof they presented the senate with a cup and shield of gold to the value of 50,000 gold pieces of their money. Another decree was then made in favour of the Jews, ratifying and confirming all that was granted them in the decree of the former year. This decree is recited, in full, by the Jewish historian, in his *Antiq.* book xiv. c. 16, but Prideaux shows that it is there misplaced, as if it had been enacted in the time of Hyrcanus the Second, while the matter contained in the decree clearly proves that it was granted to Hyrcanus the First. See Prideaux on *J. Hyr.* 9, where he clearly proves that there is some error in the placing of this decree in the writings of the Jewish historian. Such errors as this are of historic

importance, and should be carefully noticed by every reader who wishes to have correct information.

In the year 110 B. C., Hyrcanus, finding he had nothing to fear from the neighbouring princes, they being much engaged in harassing each other, and he having increased in riches and power, resolved to completely reduce Samaria and bring it under his dominion, he therefore sent Aristobulus and Antigonus, two of his sons, to besiege the city. The Samaritans, not being able to defend themselves, sent to Antiochus Cyzicenus, king of Damascus, for his assistance. On receiving the invitation he came at the head of a great army, with an intention to raise the siege and compel the Jews to retreat, but the two brothers gave him battle, and drove him to Sythopolis, after which they returned to the siege, and pressed it so hardly that the Samaritans sent to Cyzicenus a second time for relief, but he was so engaged with his own affairs that he could not comply with their wishes. They then sent for Ptolemy *Lythyrus*, king of Egypt, who sent six hundred auxiliaries, much against the will of Cleopatra, his mother, who was under some obligation to two Jews, sons of Onias (Chelcias and Ananias). These were her chief ministers, that commanded her forces and directed her councils. For their sakes therefore she favoured the Jews, and was averse to anything which might tend to their damage. When Cyzicenus heard that the Egyptian auxiliaries had arrived, he also came and joined their forces; consequently the Jews had to contend with this three-fold enemy, but they still main-

tained their ground and carried on the siege. Cyzicenus durst not attack the besiegers, but attempted to draw them off by harassing and plundering the surrounding country, hoping thereby to divert the Jews and relieve the Samaritans. But in this he failed, and finding his army continually deserting him he retired out of the field to Tripoly, leaving two of his principal commanders to conduct the remainder of the war. These officers, after one battle, commanded by Callimander, were vanquished, and Epicrates, the other commander, soon came to an agreement with the sons of Hyrcanus. For a sum of money he sold Scythopolis and all the other places which the Syrians had in their country, and thereby basely betrayed the interest of his master for his own gain. The Samaritans, therefore, finding no hopes of relief, surrendered themselves into the hands of Hyrcanus, who forthwith demolished the place and cut trenches across the ground to be filled with water that it might never be rebuilt. It may be proper here to state, that the inhabitants of Samaria at that time were not the ancient Samaritans, or the sect who worshipped God in Mount Gerezim. These had been expelled, as we have before noticed, by Alexander the Great, on account of murdering Andromachus, his governor of Syria, and that monarch re-peopled it with a race of Syro-Macedonians, who were superstitious heathens. From this time the city of Samaria remained in a ruined condition until it was rebuilt by Herod the Great, who gave it the name of Sibaste, in honour of Augustus, *Sebastos* being the Greek word for Augustus.

After this victory the Jewish prince reigned over all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, and several other places which bordered on the country. He was therefore one of the most potent princes of the age, and his power and forces were dreaded by the neighbouring nations. The remainder of his life was characterised by peace and prosperity, with the exception of the troubles he had with the Pharisees at the close of his life. Some of these Pharisees, who pretended to be more than ordinarily strict in religious matters, professed to find a flaw in his qualifications for the pontifical office. A man of this sect, named Eleazer, who is spoken of as taking delight in making disturbances, pretended that he had found out, on the testimony of the ancients, that the mother of Hyrcanus was a captive taken in the wars, and therefore he was incapable of holding the office of high priesthood according to their law. Had this statement been correct he would have been disqualified for holding this office, or being a priest of any order, for a son born of a prohibited marriage was considered in the eye of the Jewish law a profane person, and consequently incapable of holding the office of a priest. But Josephus assures us this story was altogether false, and a most notorious calumny, and was therefore resented by Hyrcanus and by all present on the occasion with great indignation. This matter, however, became the origin of great and lasting disturbance, and ultimately resulted in Hyrcanus going over to the party or sect called Sadducees. He did not live long after this unhappy disturbance, as he died the following

year. The subject was again agitated in the reign of his son, and gave rise to much bloodshed.

Hyrcanus was a man who was much and deservedly respected, and highly honoured both as a prince and a priest, and Josephus also tries to make it out that he was a prophet, but we think in this he fails, as he does in several similar cases. The troubles created by the Pharisees did not end, as we have intimated, with the death of Hyrcanus, but extended to his surviving family, and in the time of Alexander *Janeus* they became open enemies to the Maccabeans. As we have here distinctly mentioned the Pharisees and the Sadducees as religious sects existing among the Jews, and as they will afterwards be more particularly referred to, it may be the most proper place here to give a brief account of them, and also of another sect called the Essenes.





CHAPTER XIX.

Rise of the Pharisees and other Sects.



The Pharisees were numerous and influential in the time of Hyrcanus—Their supposed origin—Their high pretensions to holiness groundless—They were denounced by the Saviour—How their religion became popular—The doctrines which they held—Various sects of Pharisees—Their general character—The Sadducees—Their supposed origin—The general doctrines which they held—Their position in political and social life—The Essenes—Their origin—Their habits and manner of life—They were divided into two classes or orders—They are never mentioned in the New Testament, reasons why—Philo mentions them—Their general character—The Romanists suppose the Essenes were Christian monks—This notion shown to be false—The origin of Christian monkism—The Herodians.



HE Pharisees, if not the most ancient of the Jewish sects, were unquestionably the most popular and numerous, and consequently more influential than any distinct religious sect which ever existed amongst the ancient Jews. When, under what circumstances, and by whose agency this sect came into existence, cannot safely be determined, there being no authentic records of

their origin; and when the first mention is made of them by the Jewish historian, they were evidently both numerous and influential. It has been thought they arose before the time of the Maccabees, or about 300 B.C. If this supposition be correct, it was when Onias I. was high priest or in the days of Simon the Just, who immediately succeeded him. This righteous man entered on his pontifical office three hundred years before Christ, and soon after this period the Jews were brought under the Syrians, when, through oppression and the introduction of heathenism, the priesthood became corrupted, and the Hebrew religion in high quarters scarcely existed, even in form. Some of their high priests were openly wicked, and intermixed Judaism with heathenism, till at length the pontifical seat remained empty for seven years. It is therefore scarcely probable that the Pharisees arose in these times. Perhaps we may trace their origin in principle, at least, to a more early period. Soon after the return of the Jews from Babylon there arose two parties of men among them; one party maintained that the fulfilling of all righteousness consisted in adhering to and obeying the written word of God, as revealed to Moses and the Hebrew prophets, whose inspiration had been acknowledged by Ezra, Nehemiah, and the ecclesiastical councils; these were called *Zadikim*, or the righteous. The other party, who were called *Chaidim*, superadded to the written law the traditional constitution of the elders, and other rigorous observations, to which, by way of supererogation, they voluntarily devoted themselves,

and reckoned that they thereby attained to a higher degree of holiness than they could reach by ordinary means ; they were therefore regarded as *pious and holy* as well as righteous. From these ancient *Chaidim*, afterwards, in the days of the Maccabees, called *Assideans*, the Pharisees undoubtedly derived some of their first principles, as also did the Essenes. When they added other pretensions of extraordinary piety to these first principles they became a distinct sect, and were called Pharisees, “A term which is supposed to be derived from the Hebrew word *Pharash*, which signifies “to separate” (Bux. Lex. Rabbinicum). It appears, therefore, they were designated Pharisees, to indicate that they were separatists, not from the Jewish ecclesiastical establishment, but from the common people, whom they regarded as their inferiors, especially in a religious point of view, whom they designated *an haaretz*, or the people of the earth ; regarding themselves as super-earthly, having attained unto the highest state of piety and holiness. But it is evident from our blessed Saviour’s frequent condemnation of this sect that their religion in his day consisted merely of outward forms and ceremonies, which they performed from no higher principles than to be seen of men. They are represented as being proud, ambitious, hypocritical, and really wicked, deserving the damnation of hell. They were warned as such both by John the Baptist, and Christ, and exhorted to flee from the wrath to come, by repentance and reformation.

While the Pharisees were ceremoniously religious, we

have the highest authority to pronounce them grossly immoral; for in the New Testament they are charged with some of the worst crimes, committed under a cloak of religion, and they are denounced by Christ, who was able to estimate their true character, as deserving the greatest condemnation. In his zeal for holiness and purity of principle he designates them, not only as fools and blind guides, but hypocrites, and cruel oppressors, in exacting tithes, and devouring widows' houses, and of making the word of God of none effect by their vain traditions. And yet we find they had wrought up their system with so much plausible outward appearance as to commend itself to popular applause, and themselves to the highest seats in the synagogues and the most distinguished and honourable offices in the Jewish hierarchy; which things clearly prove the corrupt state and condition of the established religion among the Jews in the Saviour's time.

We have perhaps said enough concerning these religionists to give the reader a general idea of their character, and will only add a few particulars respecting the doctrines which they held. They are spoken of by Josephus as holding the doctrine of absolute predestination, the same as the Essenes, and yet believing in free will with the Sadducees. We may here also add that these two doctrines are held by many theologians in our day, but no man has ever yet been able to make these doctrines harmonize or appear compatible with each other. They cannot really co-exist in the same creed. It has been said the free will of man consists

in, and means no more than, freely choosing what he is unalterably predestined to choose. What is this but *free compulsion*? If a man's volition and choice be predestinated, it is no more free will, but compulsion, because, according to this theory, he is to all intents the subject of absolute necessity, both in thought and action. Those, therefore, who maintain the doctrine of absolute unconditional predestination had better, for the sake of consistency, drop the idea of free will altogether, and regard man merely as a passive instrument.

The Pharisees believed in the existence of angels and spirits, in the resurrection of the body, the immortality of the soul, and future rewards and punishments. Their grand and fundamental error in relation to faith was in placing oral tradition on a level with, if not above, written revelation, as we have just noticed. The Pharisees were divided among themselves into various sub-sects. Hence the Jerusalem and Babylonish Talmuds speak of seven different kinds of Pharisees, who were distinguished by different appellations, such as the Shechemites, the Dishing, the Bleeding, the Mortar Pharisees. But the distinctions and peculiarities of these subdivisions not being of great importance we deem it useless to enter into any minute descriptions of them.

In reference to the Sadducees, they were evidently disbelievers in God's word. We have spoken of their supposed origin in another place, from which it appears they arose about the same time as did the Pharisees.

At their commencement their professed object was to preserve or to restore the original religion of Moses, in its purity, by removing from it all which had been added to it by the traditions of the Pharisaical party. But afterwards they fell by degrees into unbelief with regard to what is evidently taught in the Jewish Scriptures, so that their creed in the Saviour's time was in many respects similar to the philosophy of Epicurus. Though they professed to believe in Moses and the prophets, their faith was very defective, for they neither believed in the immortality of the soul nor the resurrection of the body, nor in the existence of angels or spirits, all which doctrines are taught in the Jewish Scriptures, though not so clearly and explicitly as in the New Testament. The Sadducees were neither so numerous nor so influential as the Pharisees, but many of the more wealthy Jews embraced the Sadducean principles, and at times attained to high positions. Like the Pharisees, they were denounced by Christ as hypocritical and ungodly.

The Essenes were a sect more pious and devoted to God, and also more disinterested and charitable than either the Pharisees or the Sadducees. Disgusted with the religious pomp, pride, hypocrisy, and selfishness of the Pharisees, and shocked with the heathenish infidelity of the Sadducees, they separated themselves from them both; not only religiously, but also socially and locally. For they formed a settlement on the western shores of the Dead Sea, where they fixed their residence and had recourse to a mystic and an ascetic life. There they

established a community, and adopted peculiar habits and manners of living. They were divided into two classes or orders. Some of them passed their lives in a state of celibacy, but adopted and brought up children as though they had been their own in all respects. Others embraced the state of matrimony, which they considered as lawful when entered upon with the sole design of propagating the species, and not to satisfy the demands of natural desire. And therefore, before entering on the marriage state they had recourse to such peculiar customs and regulations as would, in their opinion, furnish proof of their sincerity and purity of design on this subject.

It is worthy of remark that though this sect existed in the days of Christ, he never once mentioned them, either by way of praise or blame, nor does their name ever occur in the writings of the New Testament. But this may be at least partly accounted for on the supposition that from their retired and secluded mode of life, they never came in contact with either Christ or his apostles. That they existed in and before the days of Christ is evident, not only from the writings of Josephus, who gives a lengthy description of them, but also from the writings of Philo the Jew, who wrote before Josephus; Pliny also (lib. v. c. 17) gives a description of them. It appears also from Philo's account of them, that this sect was not confined to Palestine, but had extended, in his time, to other parts; for there were some of them in Egypt. And Philo, being an Alexandrian Jew, would be better acquainted with those in

Egypt than with those in Judea and Syria, while Josephus would be better qualified to describe those in Palestine than would Philo, especially as he was for some time, in his early life, associated with this sect. Therefore, from the writings of these two ancient historians, we might, if deemed necessary, collect sufficient information to furnish the reader with a full and accurate description of them; this, however, would be superfluous. We shall, therefore, conclude with a few general facts. The Essenes were temperate, modest, industrious, contemplative, and religious; being honest, truthful, and benevolent, and worshipped God with becoming devotion. In some matters they were curious and superstitious. They were never either very numerous or influential; and beyond their own sect they never did much good, and certainly no evil, as they never interfered with politics, or disturbed mankind by enforcing their religion. It may not be generally known that the Romanists argue the divine institution of monkism from what Eusebius says of the Egyptian *contemplative Essenes*, which account he seems to have gathered from the writings of Philo, who calls them *Therapentæ*. It is argued they were Christian monks, and were formed into that order by St. Mark. This is either wilful deception, or a manifestation of historic ignorance. It is true that Eusebius says that "these Therapentæ were Christian monks instituted by St. Mark;" but without either truth or good judgment; and we are surprised that men making such high pretensions to learning should base their arguments on

such manifest errors. These Egyptian Essenes could not be Christians, because Philo wrote of them before the spread of Christianity in Egypt. He was an elderly man when he came to Rome on an embassy from the Jews of Alexandria in the year 39, which was only six years after the death of Christ, and we may be certain that no such order of Christians existed in Egypt at so early a period. Besides, Philo makes no mention of, or reference to, their Christian principles; but on the contrary speaks of their Judaism, in reference to the Sabbath and the Mosaic institution, which leads to the conclusion they were Jews and not Christians.

Christian monkery had its beginning about two hundred and fifty years after Christ, in the singular conduct of a young gentleman named Paul, who, in order to avoid the Decian persecution, fled into a desert, and fixed his abode in a cave, in which he continued during his subsequent life, his example being followed by another young gentleman named Antony, and afterwards many others adopted the same mode of living, formed themselves into a body, and constituted Antony their Abbot. Neither Christ nor his apostles ever prescribed any such useless course of life, it being altogether inconsistent with the religion which they taught. The reader will pardon this digression, and allow a few remarks on another sect, though, historically considered, rather out of place.

The Herodians being mentioned in the New Testament, we may just say, they were a political rather than a religious sect, constituted so as to please Herod

the Great, and having said this, it is sufficient to give the reader an idea of their general character. Their design was to carry out, as far as practicable, the political schemes of their founder and master. They were professed Jews, but in many of their actions practical heathens—time and men servers, corrupt and dishonest in principle, like the man whom they studied to please and whose name they bore, and, like him, they opposed Christ and the pure holy doctrines which he preached. This disgraceful sect was ephemeral, but it existed quite long enough. We must now return to that stage of Jewish history where we broke off, in order to describe the above mentioned sects.





CHAPTER XX.

Aristobulus and Antigonus.



Aristobulus the eldest son of Hyrcanus—how he succeeded his father in the government of Judea—His unworthy character and cruel conduct—His short and unhappy reign—Remarks on historical statements concerning his brother's death (Antigonus)—The cruel conduct of the queen in this affair—The awful death of Aristobulus—A curious story respecting prophecy, related by Josephus—His idea of the Essenian prophets not sustained.



AT the death of Hyrcanus, which took place 107 B.C., Aristobulus, his eldest son, succeeded him both in the office of high priest and supreme governor of the country. In the conduct of this prince we are furnished with manifest proof of his unworthiness to sustain either of these important offices. His first transaction, after his assumption to governing authority, was an act of consummate cruelty, and a disgrace to the Maccabean dynasty. In the first place he demonstrated his ambition by putting a diadem upon his head and assuming the title of king, which none of his predecessors had done since the Babylonish captivity. His mother most likely disapproved of this conduct, for

by his father's will his mother could claim a right to the sovereignty after his death. But Aristobulus having overpowered her, cast her into prison, where she lay until she was starved to death. He also cast three of his brothers into prison, where he kept them during his life; and as to the other, Antigonus, he allowed him for a time to share in the government, but afterwards put him to death also. The reign of this cruel and unhappy prince was short and tragical. His first act was the murder of his mother, and his last the slaughtering of his valiant brother, immediately after which he died a most miserable death. And yet, strange to say, Josephus says "he was a man of candour and of great modesty," and then through Strabo quotes Timagenes, the Alexandrian historian, in confirmation of this testimony, who says, "This man was a person of candour and very serviceable to the Jews, for he added a country to them, and obtained a great part of the nation of the Iturians for them." Timagenes ought to have said that his innocent and brave brother, Antigonus, whose death Aristobulus foolishly and cruelly brought about, "obtained a great part of the nation of the Iturians," for this, according to historical details, was really the case. For while Aristobulus was engaged in a war with the Iturians he fell sick and had to return to Jerusalem, but Antigonus stayed with the army and finished the war. While Aristobulus lay ill his queen made him believe that Antigonus had a design to usurp the throne, by which means he was excited to jealousy. When Antigonus returned from the Iturian war in

triumph to Jerusalem, it being the time of the feast of tabernacles, he went immediately up to the temple to perform his devotions, without stopping to alter his dress; he therefore appeared in his armour and his guards about him, as he entered the city. This action was misrepresented to the king, who was made to believe it was an indication that Antigonus intended at once to put an end to his brother's life and take the kingdom for himself. The guilty wretch, whose conscience still smote him, and whose hands were still red with the blood of his mother, whom he caused to be starved to death in prison, was now terrified, thinking, no doubt, that the day of retribution was at hand. But though sick and self-condemned, this "*candid and modest man*" devised a plan to murder his gallant brother, who had just returned from fighting his battles and adding territory to his dominion.

Aristobulus sent an order for his brother to come to his palace where he then lay ill, and that he must come unarmed as a token that there was no hurt intended; at the same time he had arranged for a guard to be placed in the passage through which he knew his brother must pass, and gave instructions that if he came in his armour they must slay him immediately. The crafty queen hearing of this arrangement, and being determined if possible to sacrifice the life of Antigonus, corrupted the message, and caused Antigonus to be informed that the king, hearing that he had a very fine suit of armour, was desirous that he should appear before him in the same, that he might see how it became

him. Antigonus on receiving this message, immediately passed through the gallery on his way to the king, and when the guards saw him approach in his glittering panoply, they fell upon him according to their orders, and murdered him. The queen was certainly more to blame in this case than the timid and foolish king. Timid because his fears were groundless, and foolish because the plan he devised for detecting his brother, provided he had intended mischief, was artless and silly, such as a crafty schemer might have turned to great advantage. Aristobulus, after the slaughter of his brother, grievously repented that he had been the cause of it. His mind was racked with the horrors of remorse and despair, in which state of mind the murder of his mother would again flash in his conscience, and sting his guilty soul beyond endurance. This state of mind aggravated the disease under which he was suffering, so that he was seized with a vomiting of blood, and as one of his servants was carrying it away in a vessel, he stumbled and spilt it, on the very spot where his brother had been assassinated. It is not improbable that the blood of Antigonus, which still remained on the floor, was the cause of the accident, for it is said to have taken place "on the very spot where the blood of Antigonus *remained on the ground.*" The bystanders, at this singular and revolting occurrence, uttered a piercing outcry of horror; the king, who heard it, inquired the cause thereof, and being informed of what had taken place, the shock was more than he could endure. He became his own accuser, for

feeling the greatest agony, both of body and mind, he cried out, "Great God, thou dost avenge very justly the fratricide which I have committed; how long will my guilty soul be thus confined within my body?" And when he had uttered this affecting and melancholy exclamation, he gave up the ghost, and his "guilty soul" appeared before the tribunal of his Maker. Thus ended the life of a man who murdered his venerable mother to gain an earthly crown, and who caused the death of his unoffending brother, as he thought, to preserve it, after having reigned only one year to wear it. This man was of the Maccabean family, grandson of the venerable and pious Simon, who shone so brilliantly during the Maccabean wars and the Jewish reformation; he was also the son of the famous Hyrcanus, who so honourably sustained his high position as governor and pontiff of the nation. How soon the glory of these celebrated reformers became tarnished, and the noble cause for which they bled and died became corrupted by the misdeeds of their own posterity, and was never after purified, for the successor of Aristobulus, who was the last Maccabean prince able to hold the reins of government, was no better than himself.

Josephus relates a curious story respecting the death of Antigonus, in which he endeavours to make it appear that a man named Judas, an Essene, had predicted his death, and that it should take place on that day at Straton's Tower, which the prophet understood to mean a tower of that name which stood on the sea-coast, and was afterwards called Cesarea. And this place being

two days' journey from Jerusalem, Judas, therefore, on seeing Antigonus that day so far from this Straton's Tower, concluded that his prophecy was by some means defeated, on which account he was, like Jonah, in great distress of mind on seeing Antigonus alive and at so great a distance from the place where he had predicted his death should take place. This the Jewish historian relates in his own peculiar style (*Antiq. lib. xiii. c. 19*), and then he adds, "the subterraneous gallery where Antigonus was slain was just under that turret or tower which was called Straton's Tower." And, therefore, he concludes the prophecy was fulfilled, much to the satisfaction of Judas the Essenian prophet. It is worthy of notice that Josephus speaks of this prophecy in connection with Judas teaching "the art of foretelling things to come." So it appears he pretended to have rules by which he predicted future events, and taught the science as a mysterious art. Not like the divinely inspired prophets who never resorted to necromancy of any kind, but spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Notwithstanding the various attempts of Josephus to prove that true prophets existed among the Jews after the days of Malachi, it seems that he was labouring under mistake; he fails, at least in our judgment, to furnish satisfactory proof of this.



CHAPTER XXI.

Alexander Jannæus, King of Judæa.



Alexander Jannæus puts one of his brothers to death, but allows the other to live in retirement—Alexander an extraordinary character—A summary of his battles, campaigns, defeats, and victories—The Pharisees cause him much trouble—He puts 6,000 offenders to the slaughter—He is guarded by 6,000 foreign mercenaries—His expedition against the Arabs in the land of Moab and Gilead, &c.—Loses most of his army in Arabia—The dreadful consequence of his Arabian expedition—Civil war in which 50,000 were slain—Demetrius marches with a powerful army into Judea to assist the Jewish rebels—Some of the rebels turn in favour of Alexander, and thereby save him from utter ruin—The end of Demetrius—The rebel party defeated—The barbarous conduct of Alexander towards the subdued rebels—Strictures on the opinions of various historians—The general character of Alexander—His death—His last instruction and advice to his wife—Remarks on his plausible counsel—Examination of Dr. Prideaux's remarks relative to Anna the Prophetess.



WHEN Aristobulus was dead, his wife, Salome, released the three brothers from prison; and Alexander, surnamed Jannæus, being the eldest, took the government of the kingdom. When he commenced his reign some attempts were made

by his younger brother to interrupt him, which was construed into treason, for which offence he was immediately put to death; but the other brother, called Absalom, being willing to quietly submit to Alexander's ruling authority, was allowed to live, and as he remained in retirement from all public life, Alexander was very kind to him. Had he offended in one instance, or given the least indication of disquietude, most likely death would have been his instant portion, for Alexander evidently delighted in shedding blood, and was determined at any sacrifice to maintain his supreme authority. The life of this prince was characterised by the most extraordinary vicissitudes and sanguinary events. It is not improbable that his ambition and predominant desire for dominion and power prompted him to imitate the great Macedonian king of the same name. We shall not attempt to describe the particulars of his brilliant conquests and terrible defeats in connection with his military career, but simply to give a brief summary of his battles, campaigns, and sieges, and the result of his turbulent and bloody reign. In the first year of his elevation to the throne, after settling matters at home, he marched at the head of his troops, as chief commander, against the Ptolemians, and after vanquishing them in battle he shut them up in the city (Ptolemais) and there besieged them. But being attacked by the enemy without he was obliged to raise the siege and lead off his army into the field.

In this expedition he sustained the loss of 30,000 men, and would have been utterly ruined, had not

Cleopatra, the Queen of Egypt, sent him timely assistance, by which means he was enabled to stop the victorious march of the enemy. Ptolemy Lathyrus, who was expelled by his mother, the Queen of Egypt, raised an army in the island of Cyprus, and invaded Palestine. Both armies, after spending their strength, left the battle-field to recruit their forces. Alexander did not long remain at rest. He next marched into Cœlo-Syria, and besieged the city of Gadara with success, and then proceeded to Amathus, one of the strong fortresses of the country, where were concealed much valuable property. He gained a temporary possession of this fortress, but soon sustained a terrible defeat from Theodorus, who not only regained his treasures, but also captured the baggage of Alexander and killed 10,000 of his men. But notwithstanding this defeat and loss, such was the constancy and determination of this Jewish warrior, that, after recruiting his army, he marched to Raphia and Authedon, towns situated on the Mediterranean, and took them. He then laid siege to Gaza, which was so skilfully and gallantly defended by Apollodotus and his brave soldiers that, at the end of the year, Alexander had made but little progress, and his army was almost ruined by a desperate sally made upon them in the dead of the night. At length, to the great advantage of the besiegers, sedition arose in the city, Apollodotus was murdered by his brother, and the place was betrayed into the hands of Alexander, who put the inhabitants of the city, old and young, male and female, to the

sword. In this indiscriminate slaughter many of the Jews were cut off by the enraged citizens, who bravely and desperately fought for their lives. Alexander, feeling mortified by the resistance he had met with, and the loss he had sustained, reduced the city to a heap of ruins, and left it as a monument of his wrathful indignation.

While Alexander was absent with his army, the Pharisees had so much distracted the affairs at home, that when he returned to Jerusalem, after the siege of Gaza, they poured upon him the greatest contempt, and publicly insulted him. When he was going to the temple to officiate as high priest, at the feast of tabernacles, the people joined in a sort of mutiny against him, pelted him with citron; and while he was offering the festival sacrifices on the great altar, they (in allusion to what Eleazar had said concerning his mother) called him a slave, and, as such, unworthy of either the pontifical or the regal office. Though Josephus says they had no reason to entertain this idea concerning his mother (being a captive taken in war), yet it is evident that many of the people believed it, and when she expired in prison, through the treatment of her cruel son Aristobulus, they quietly submitted to the wrong without any manifest resentment, which we may suppose they would not have done had they believed she was a Jewess. How this matter was we cannot safely say, as we are not furnished with any account of her ancestors or family.

Alexander was so irritated by these insults that he

commanded his troops to fall upon the people, and such was the slaughter which they made that the streets of Jerusalem were soon stained with the blood of 6,000 of these offenders. For this rash act Alexander for ever rendered himself insecure amongst his own people. His conduct caused them to fear him, while, at the same time, they hated him, and only wanted an opportunity to destroy him. Alexander being aware of this felt himself unsafe; he, therefore, engaged 6,000 foreign mercenaries, Pisidians and Cilicians, to form his body guard; and thus he became alienated from his people. The severe measures which he adopted with the unruly and disaffected Pharisees only checked them for the time being, the cause still existed. Had he joined clemency with correction he might have had confidence in his own army for protection, which would have produced mutual confidence and affection among the people; but as he acted the part of an overbearing despot, he was obliged to place himself under foreign protectors for safety: the result of this mutual exasperation was most tragical. When Alexander, by the terror of his bloody inflictions, had calmed down the storm which was rising against him, he again marched out against his foreign enemies, and having passed over the Jordan, made war with the Arabians and the inhabitants of the land of Moab and Gilead, and compelled them to become tributaries to him. He then went to the fortress of Amathus, where he supposed were concealed the immense treasures of Theodorus, who had

retaken them from Alexander, as we have before stated, and by whom he was defeated with great loss.

The name of the Jewish conqueror had become so terrible by this time that Theodorus durst not stand a siege against him, he therefore carried off his treasures, withdrew his garrison, and left the empty deserted fortress for Alexander to act with it as he pleased. He destroyed the fortress, and this was all he could do,—no doubt very angry because there were neither treasures to gain, nor blood to shed, for he had now become so accustomed to war and plunder that either would have caused him great joy. But being disappointed in both he made an expedition into Gaulonitis, a country lying on the east side of the lake of Gennesareth, and there engaged in a war against Obedas, an Arabian king. But on this occasion the Arab chief proved too shrewd for the Jewish hero, for Alexander was drawn by him into an ambuscade, where he lost most of his army, and narrowly escaped being taken prisoner himself by an heroic Arab prince. He was humbled to the dust, and compelled to return to Jerusalem; but instead of his people giving him a hearty welcome after his toils and conflicts they rose in open rebellion against him. When he left them they were much embittered against him, and on his return, in his comparatively weak condition, they resolved to destroy him. Such was the animosity of his subjects against him, that when he inquired of them what he could do to obtain their goodwill, they unanimously replied that he had nothing to do but to

kill himself. Alexander, however wishful to oblige them, was not willing to commit suicide, but made up his mind, if possible, to subdue them. He took courage, and lost no time in getting together a military force sufficiently strong to successfully oppose them, whereon commenced a civil war which lasted six years, during which period 50,000 people were destroyed, and innumerable calamities entailed on the nation.

The rebels, not feeling themselves able to withstand the forces which Alexander brought against them, applied to Demetrius *Eucherus*, who had established himself as king of Damascus, for assistance. Demetrius gladly complied with their request, and forthwith marched into Judea, and joined the Hebrew rebels. The army of Demetrius consisted of Syrians and Jews, and amounted to 40,000 foot and 3,000 horse. Alexander encountered them with 6,000 Greek mercenaries and 20,000 loyal Jews; but he was overthrown with great slaughter,—“He lost all his Greeks to a man, and the greater part of his other forces.” With the remnant of his broken and discomfited army he fled into the mountains for refuge. It was thought that at this time he would have been utterly ruined had he not received assistance from some of the rebel party, who, when they saw him in such distress, took compassion on him, and 6,000 of them went over to him; most likely thinking they might as well have a known tyrant of their own nation for a governor, as an unknown tyrant of foreign blood for their king.

When Demetrius saw so many going out to sympathize

with their discomfited king, he feared the rest might do the same, and having had the satisfaction of shedding a deal of blood, and humbling the haughty Jewish prince, he thought it safest and best to march with his own troops out of Judea, and go and fight *with* his brother Philip at Antioch. In this expedition he got well beaten—was taken prisoner—sent as a present to Mithridates, king of Parthia, in whose hands he fell sick and died. After this Philip reigned over all Syria without a rival or competitor; but his reign was of short duration.

After the retreat of Demetrius out of Judea, Alexander again collected his shattered forces, and strengthened his army with additional recruits, with a renewed determination to crush the rebel party; and having vanquished them in several conflicts, he tried to bring them to terms of peace, but they refused, and continued to fight furiously against him, till they were completely defeated. The most desperate of them were taken prisoners, and ultimately put to death.

The number of rebels which Alexander took prisoners after the siege of Bethome was 800, and in the manner of treating them he was guilty of the most barbarous act of cruelty ever recorded in the annals of any history. It was this which got him the appellation of *Thracidas*; which was intended to indicate that he was as cruel and as wicked as the *Thracians*, a people the most notorious for barbarity, debauchery, and venereal pleasure then known upon earth. And indeed no name in human language could be too bad, or even bad enough, to

express the conduct and character of this princely and pontifical monster. Nevertheless, with all his apostacy and unutterable wickedness, he was still both high priest and king of the Jews. These 800 prisoners, whom he triumphantly brought in chains to Jerusalem, were all crucified in one day, and he put their wives and children to death before their faces as they hung dying on the crosses; while he, his wives and concubines, were banqueting in view of the horrid scene, to feast their eyes and cruel passions by witnessing the mortal agonies of the expiring sufferers.

In order to rightly judge of the conduct and moral feelings of the two parties, loyal and rebel, let the reader contrast the two cases just mentioned. When Alexander was overpowered by Demetrius, so that he was just on the verge of ruin, he found sympathy in the rebel party, who saved him, in his helpless condition, from utter destruction, by going over in thousands to his assistance. But when Alexander gained strength, and thereby got the rebels into his power, he put them to this shameful and cruel death, and with his wives and concubines gratified his depraved passions with their dying agonies. Nero was never guilty of greater cruelty. It is true, the Christians whom he put to death in his garden were innocent and unoffending victims, but they were not of his religion, and he was a poor blind pagan. But Alexander crucified his own subjects, who were of the same religion with himself, and being high priest at the same time he ought to have exercised forbearance, as the rebel party had done towards him.

His savage barbarity is without a comparison, save in the conduct of papal Rome towards true Christians. But we are told by historians that "this cruelty had its effects." "This terrible example completely quelled all resistance against Alexander; he was never more molested by any other mutiny during the rest of his reign, and this *tranquillity* at home enabled him to extend his conquests abroad." Yes, there was tranquillity, like that of a stagnant pool, which breeds all manner of offensive and troublesome insects, and poisons the atmosphere with pestilential exhalations. True, he extended his conquests abroad, and added extensive territories to his dominion, but his kingdom, nevertheless, wanted the elements of political cohesion and consolidation. Alexander made Judea again into a great kingdom, but it tumbled to pieces immediately subsequent to his death; and in reality he was the last Jewish king who was able to govern the nation. And the probability is, had he lived much longer his troubles would have so increased from various quarters, that he would have been overwhelmed and have lost his governing authority. His subjects were discontented, and the people whom he had conquered would not have calmly submitted long to his tyranny.

After putting down the rebellion in Jerusalem, he spent three years in besieging cities, subduing provinces, and killing people who would not submit to his government and requirements, chiefly those places and people that had revolted during the civil war, in which he caused the death of 50,000 of his subjects. When

he returned to Jerusalem he gave himself up to luxury and drunkenness, which is supposed to have brought on his last affliction, under which he languished for three years. A short time before his death, thinking that exercise might improve his health, he marched with his army to the country beyond the Jordan, and besieged Ragala, a castle of the Geraseas, where he died in camp; Alexandra the queen being then with him. When she found he was in a dying state, she was exceedingly troubled in reference to her future prospects. She knew that the generality of the people had great hatred towards the whole family, and she had therefore reason to expect that after Alexander's death they would wreak their vengeance upon her and her children, and destroy the whole family. And no wonder that such dismal apprehensions should take possession of her mind, when we reflect on the conduct of Alexander towards his subjects. The Pharisees had undoubtedly been highly to blame in exciting the people to rebellion, and their conduct merited punishment; but no consideration can justify the rigorous severity and wanton barbarity which he had indiscriminately inflicted upon so many of his subjects.

Alexander was aware that the Pharisees were anxious to obtain power, and he very reasonably supposed at his demise nothing else would satisfy them, and that unless this was granted rebellion would immediately ensue, and his wife and family would again be embroiled in civil war. Such was "*the tranquillity*" of the home part of his kingdom! He therefore directed the queen

to conceal his death, for he knew he was dying, until the castle should be taken, and then lead back the army in triumph to Jerusalem, carry with her his corpse, and as soon as she arrived, call together the chief of the Pharisees, and lay before them his dead body and tell them she resigned it wholly to their pleasure, either to be cast forth with ignominy in revenge for what they had suffered from him, or otherwise to be disposed of as they should think fit. And he moreover instructed her to promise them that she would follow their advice in all matters of the government, and do nothing therein but what should be agreeable to their wishes, and according to their direction. And he then added, "follow this my advice, and you shall not only gain me an honourable funeral, but also both for you and your children a safe settlement in the government." She followed the direction of her dying husband, and it came to pass as he had predicted. For the Pharisees, on hearing that they, by his direction, were to have the administration of the government and the management of all affairs, immediately laid aside their former hatred and bitterness to the dead king, which they had contracted and cherished while he was living, and professed to venerate his memory. They passed high encomiums upon him, magnified his great exploits in enlarging their dominions, and increasing thereby the power, honour, and interest of the nation, and used every means to reconcile the common people to his family. They also buried his body with

great pomp and funereal honours equal to those of any of the former Maccabean princes.

This demise and direction may at the first glance appear very plausible and right, considered as a compensation to an injured people, or a piece of good policy, in reference to the tranquillity and safety of his own family, for the time being; but the rights and privileges of another party ought to have been considered also; and the want of this was afterwards grievously felt, and became the source of endless uneasiness and trouble. The very men who stood by Alexander, and supported him in his lifetime, sometimes contrary to their own judgment and feelings, were completely ignored in his will; nay, they were really placed under their enemies, whom they had thus created to please the man who now placed them in a powerless position. His only object in death, or when dying, was to secure for his body an honourable interment, and the comfortable settlement of his family afterwards. He seemed to entirely lose sight of his friends, and the real welfare of the nation. How inconsistent was his conduct in this respect. If the Pharisees were a sect so unfit for power and government while he was living, and their conduct so bad that he hesitated not to slay them by thousands, it was wrong in him when dying to arrange for them to have the entire government of the nation, to the exclusion of his friends and the party whom he could trust while living. The fact is, he had done wrong through life, and he consequently felt himself wrong in death. He wished to satisfy an injured party, and to make

them some compensation for the injury he had done them, and he also dreaded their retaliation on his family: these thoughts and feelings caused him to lose sight of his friends.

As High Priest of the Church of the living God, he had spent too much of his time in shedding blood, in satisfying his carnal appetites and sensual desires, and too little of his time in his religious duties. Hence vital religion during his reign must have been nearly extinct. As at the time just previous to the Maccabean reformation, it consisted principally in ritualistic mockery; and it could not possibly be otherwise amidst the strife, cruelty, and crimes which were practiced by its chief officers. Alas! for the Maccabean family, whose piety and holy valour raised the nation from the verge of ruin, and the brilliancy of whose deeds have never been surpassed, nor ever will be by mere mortals. But the folly and wickedness of their successors undermined the wealth, the honour, the stability, and glory of the kingdom, and caused the throne to tremble. Alexander, by his irregular, foolish, and barbarous conduct, did more towards bringing about the termination of the Asmonean dynasty and the ruin of the nation, than all his conquests, as a military man, did towards its extension and establishment. It is to be hoped, however, there were some pious people among the Jews in those dark and troublesome times.

Before concluding this chapter we may just observe, that Prideaux twice makes mention of one pious woman who lived in the time of Alexander, viz., Anna, spoken

of in the New Testament (Luke ii. 36-37), but from what source he has obtained his information he does not say. He seems to think she was really "a widow about fourscore and four years," or according to his explanation 88 years, for he says she was married 95 B.C., and left a widow 88 B.C. If so, she must have been about 110 years old when Christ was born,—a thing not impossible, but we think very improbable; for she was then a woman of great activity, daily attending to her religious duties. We think the sacred text means she was then a widow, and her real age was 84 years. If so she was born in the twenty-first year of Alexander's reign, or about six years before his death, and might be married about 68 B.C., in the time of Hyrcanus II. and Aristobulus his brother. And she would be left a widow about the time that Pompey conquered Jerusalem, and restored Hyrcanus II. to the office of high priest. She was certainly a woman noted for her extraordinary piety and her strict and uniform attention to religious duties. This is evident from the honourable mention made of her by the inspired evangelist, "There was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; and she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." Luke ii. 36-38. She being designated

a prophetess may signify no more than that she was a person of deep piety, and a teacher of religion,—this is the opinion of several learned commentators. She no doubt read and studied the holy prophets, and might frequently speak of the long expected Messiah, and therefore in a subordinate sense might be regarded as a prophetess.





CHAPTER XXII.

• Queen Alexandra and Pompey.



Queen Alexandra—She communicates the will of the late king to the Pharisees, to their great delight—The conduct of the pharisaical sect the cause of great uneasiness—The Pharisees appoint Hyrcanus high priest—The traditional constitution is restored—The Pharisees demand the liberty of all the prisoners who were committed during the civil war, and restitution—The queen, through fear, yields to the demand—The Pharisees avenge the death of the crucified rebels—Aristobulus goes with the aggrieved party to the queen to complain of the conduct of the pharisaical party—The queen in great difficulty—Her prudent arrangement—Aristobulus attempts to raise himself to the throne—Josephus and Prideaux on the conduct of Alexandra—Hyrcanus succeeds his mother as governing prince—Aristobulus raises an army and fights with the troops of Hyrcanus—Hyrcanus submits to his brother—The fall of the Pharisees—Josephus and Archbishop Usher on Hyrcanus' reign—Antipater, father of Herod, takes the command of the Hyrcanian army, and uses means to restore Hyrcanus to the throne—He resorts to crafty measures—Aretas, an Arabian king, marches into Judea with 50,000 troops to give battle to Aristobulus—The duplicity of the Arab general—The curious story of Josephus concerning Onias—Pompey sends orders to Aretas to withdraw his troops from Jerusalem—The retreating army of Aretas pursued by Aristobulus—The great power of Pompey—He finishes his war in Armenia and comes into Judea—He supports the claims of Hyrcanus—The siege of Jerusalem by

Pompey—The battle of the temple—The last victory gained by Pompey—He returns in triumph to Rome—A brief sketch of Pompey's life.



HE indiscreet and severe conduct of Alexander —during his reign—towards the pharisaical party, and at his death having made provision for them to come into full power of governing the nation, laid the foundation of ceaseless trouble during the reign of his surviving queen, and the sanguinary strife which followed, and so long continued between his two sons.

When the Pharisees were informed by Alexandra what the late king had instructed her to do in favour of their party they were transported with joy, and extolled the deceased king, whom they previously abhorred, as a mighty conqueror and a sincere patriot; and they bestowed upon his body a most magnificent funeral. They also professed to be highly delighted that the government was left in the hands of Alexandra, but their pleasure arose from the fact stated by Josephus, “Alexandra had the kingdom, and the Pharisees the power.” And this power they soon began to use and abuse to their own advantage, and thereby created such uneasiness and dissatisfaction among the rest of the subjects as seemed to indicate the approach of another civil war. All this Alexander might have foreseen had he been a prudent man, but he simply arranged or dictated measures to calm the rising storm, which he saw gathering among the Pharisees, without due regard to the consequences of his measures. The

admission of the Pharisees to political power was eventually of very great importance to the Jewish nation, as was subsequently manifested ; for this power continued and increased with a most commanding influence over the minds of the people until the time of Christ, and afterwards, until the destruction of the nation ; and their conduct throughout shows them to have been a most mischievous sect. Under a high and pompous profession of extraordinary piety they were guilty of the most dishonourable conduct : in saying this, we have Christ for our authority.

Alexandra, after being settled on the throne, with the apparent satisfaction of the Pharisees, appointed her eldest son, Hyrcanus, (the second Maccabean prince of that name,) to the office of high priest, and yielded up the administration of civil government, in a great measure, to the Pharisees. The first thing which they did was to revoke the decree of Hyrcanus *the First*, who, at the latter end of his life, having fallen out with the Pharisees, caused their traditional constitution to be abolished, and which, until this time, had been firmly adhered to. This decree was mortifying to the pharisaical sect ; and now being in power they were determined to have it revoked. By this act of revocation the traditional constitution was restored, and the Pharisees had full liberty to propagate and impose it upon the people.

In the next place they demanded of the queen to liberate all the prisoners who had been committed during the civil war in the time of Alexander, and to

recall those who had been sent into banishment for the like offences, or obliged to flee their country for safety. They next demanded retributive justice against those at whose instigation and by whose advice Alexander had crucified the eight hundred rebels taken at the siege of Bethome. This demand, it will be seen, included all who had stood by the king and supported him in suppressing the rebellion, for they were all either directly or indirectly, by implication, involved in this guilt. Hence it was in effect to obtain royal consent to avenge the blood of the rebels upon the whole royal party, to whatever extent they might think proper.

The queen, through fear of another civil war, yielded to their demands, and they soon commenced the terrible work of revenge, which they carried on with such cruelties that their conduct became intolerable and hateful. At length the suffering party, who had been friends of the late king, went in a body to the queen, with Aristobulus, her younger son, at their head, and ventured to remonstrate with her against the oppression and persecution of the pharisaical party. On obtaining an interview with the queen they showed her how hard it was that they should be thus punished and persecuted for faithfully adhering to, and supporting the king and his family in the late civil wars, and therefore they earnestly besought her either to relieve them from such oppression or allow them to peaceably leave the country; or otherwise appoint them to locate in and support the various garrisons in the more distant parts of the kingdom, so that they might be out

of the reach of their enemies. The queen sympathised with them, and admitted the correctness of their statements, but she was now in the power of the Pharisees, and could not act as she pleased without exposing herself to immediate danger. She was reluctant either to part with so many of her friends, who had manifested their fidelity to the royal family in time of trouble, or to leave herself defenceless in the absolute power of a turbulent faction; she therefore complied with their third stipulation, and placed them in the several garrisons of her kingdom, and this, all things considered, was perhaps the most prudent arrangement: "For when they were thus settled in these fortresses, with their swords in their hands, their enemies could no more approach them to do them any hurt, and they served, while there, as a reserve for the service of the queen whenever occasion might require." She had certainly some reason to apprehend and dread what followed, viz., the attempt of Aristobulus to raise himself to the throne; but if she had acted otherwise than she did it is very likely such an attempt would have been made by some means.

The command of the frontier garrisons was held by Aristobulus, and this prince employed the power thus invested in him to no other advantage than that of securing to himself the affections of the army under his command, and by this means increasing his military force; his object being, as soon as opportunity offered itself, to supplant his brother, take possession of the throne, and to subdue the Pharisees. The regency of

Alexandra continued nine years, during which she had much trouble with the two contending parties, and immediately after her death the strife for kingly authority commenced; for Aristobulus had privately arranged on the decease of his mother to seize the crown for himself.

With regard to the character and conduct of Alexandra, historians have differed in their opinions. Josephus speaks of her as a very ambitious woman, who paid no regard to the principles of either honour or justice; that she counted every object inferior to that of absolute possession of power and dominion. He also complains of her committing herself to the guidance of the Pharisees, who had been hostile to her family, and adds, "the policy she pursued when alive, after her death filled her palace with calamity and trouble." At the first glance it may appear so to the reader; but Josephus ought to have considered the circumstances in which she was placed at the king's death, and the instructions which he gave to her in reference to the policy she was to pursue. And we cannot but think, if he had done so, he would not have been so severe in his condemnations, but have spoken in language more temperate and qualified. We think Prideaux speaks more correctly in reference to her character where he says, "She was a princess of great wisdom, and had she not gone too much to the Pharisees, *or could she possibly have avoided doing so*, no exception could have been made to her government."

After the death of Alexandra, Hyrcanus, her eldest

son, succeeded to the regal and pontifical dignities, "but the reign of this mild and unambitious prince only continued for the short space of *three months*." (Josephus.) We deem it proper here just to notice that there exists some disagreement among historians as to the length of time Hyrcanus reigned. In Josephus we read "*three months*," and yet this statement does not agree with what he afterwards relates on this subject, Prideaux therefore concludes he has fallen into a mistake. Archbishop Usher is of opinion that the *three months* ought to be read *three years*, and says that it was so in the original, but that "the Greek word for months crept in instead of that which is for years by the error of some scribe that wrote out the copy." Other learned men suppose, though he resigned his regal dignity at the end of three months, yet that he held the high priesthood for three years afterwards, until he fled to Aretas at the instigation of Antipater. This last opinion appears most likely, and we think it may be admitted without absolutely rejecting what is said either by the learned Dean or the critical and accomplished Bishop. The Jewish historian may have fallen into some error in the use and application of the terms *months* and *years*, and as Bishop Usher remarks there may have been some error made in copying from the original. It is evident from what took place immediately after the death of Alexandra, that the reign of Hyrcanus must have been very short, but he might be allowed to retain the high priesthood for some time afterwards.

Aristobulus, during the last sickness of his mother, had been making preparation to seize the crown at her death, and in the short space of fifteen days twenty-two of the garrisons were quietly surrendered into his hands, and the rest were not able to withstand his forces. When the Pharisees saw how he prevailed they got up an army to oppose him. Aristobulus with his army met them near Jericho, where a decisive battle was fought between the two brothers, or more correctly speaking, between Aristobulus and the Pharisees, Hyrcanus being a dull and indolent man, who had neither understanding nor capacity to govern, and who was a mere tool in the hands of the Pharisaical party. In this battle the forces of Hyrcanus were defeated, and he fled to Jerusalem where he shut himself up in the castle of Baris. Being unable further to defend himself he came to terms of peace with his brother, by which it was agreed that Aristobulus should have all he sought after, viz., the crown and the high priesthood. The kingdom, or the people, he had already on his side, for being weary of the oppression and tyranny of the Pharisees, they had gone over to him expecting to find relief. Hyrcanus willingly submitted to his brother, and agreed to live a private life under his protection, on his own private fortune, which was most agreeable to his easy and quiet disposition. This arrangement brought about the downfall of the tyrannical Pharisees, who had during the formal administration of Alexandra ruled with a very high and oppressive hand, the queen's regency being principally controlled by them. Aristobulus having supplanted

Hyrcanus and taken hold on the reins of government, had but little to fear from his weak and subjugated brother, and he had also a sufficient military force at his command to keep down the pharisaical party. But they were still active and persevering in their efforts to regain their former power and influence, and in order to accomplish their designs they had recourse to foreign aid. They soon found a person well qualified to render them such assistance as they required, and who at the same time had his own personal aggrandisement in view, his grand object being to supersede the Maccabean family in the government of Judea.

This person was Antipater, the son of Antipas, an Idumean nobleman. He was the father of Herod the Great, who afterwards became the king of the Jews. The promotion of Antipater to head generalship and commanding authority prepared the way for the establishment of a new dynasty in the person of his distinguished son Herod, and which has since been called "the Herodian dynasty." Hence we see the wickedness and folly of the Maccabean princes, as manifest in the conduct of Alexander and his family dissensions; and in submitting to the teachers of a corrupt religion they made way for a gentile prince to rule over them. The cruelties and intemperance of the late king sullied the lustre and glory which shone upon the nation with such brilliancy in the days of Judas Maccabeus and his four illustrious brothers, and being weighed in the balance, he was found wanting of piety and wisdom, and the kingdom was again rent in twain and then given to

another. What a striking similarity in many respects between the rise and fall of the ancient Hebrew monarchy and the Maccabean dynasty; the latter, of course, being much inferior to the former, and of shorter duration.

Antipas, the grandfather of Herod, was appointed by Alexander Janneus as governor of Idumea, and was highly esteemed both by the king and Alexandra his queen; on account of which Antipater, the father of Herod, was admitted into the royal court, where he contracted the strongest friendship with Hyrcanus. He would no doubt, on account of this juvenile friendship, look to the young prince, as heir-apparent, for subsequent promotion and honour, while from Aristobulus he could expect no favour whatever; he therefore, as a matter of policy, exerted himself to the utmost to restore Hyrcanus to his regal position, as on this depended his own promotion and aggrandisement. But Hyrcanus was too dull and unaspiring to be stimulated to make any exertion to raise himself to the throne. He preferred ease and quietness to honour and power. The crafty Idumean, finding it impossible to arouse and excite Hyrcanus into a contest with his brother, had recourse to another method. He insinuated to him that his life was in danger, and that he must either lay claim to the crown or quietly submit to die. He therefore advised him, as an old and true friend, to flee for safety to Aretas, king of Arabia, whom Antipater had prepared to receive him.

This plan succeeded, and Hyrcanus fled from Jeru-

salem and took refuge with the Arabian king. Aretas immediately marched an army of 50,000 men into Judea, and being joined by the soldiers of Hyrcanus, whom Antipater had clandestinely stimulated to take a part in this war, the united forces gave battle to Aristobulus, and defeated him, so that he was compelled to take refuge in the temple mount at Jerusalem, where he was besieged by the victorious party. The generality of the people also declared in favour of Hyrcanus, while the priests stood by Aristobulus. This event was at the time of the passover, and the besieged party wanting lambs and beasts for the sacrifices of that holy solemnity, agreed with the besiegers to furnish them with a certain quantity for a stipulated sum of money. But when they let down the money over the wall, the besiegers refused to deliver up the sacrifices. This deception was regarded as a sacrilegious crime.

Josephus also mentions another particular circumstance, which may be regarded as very impious and daring on the part of the besiegers: "There was at that time one Onias, a man of great reputation for the sanctity of his life, who had been thought by his prayers to have obtained rain from heaven in time of drought, they brought him into the army, and, concluding his curse would be prevalent as his prayers, pressed him to curse Aristobulus and all that were with him. He long resisted to hearken to them, but at length finding no rest from their importunities, he lifted up his hands towards heaven, and standing in the midst of them, prayed thus: 'O Lord God, Rector of the universe,

since those who are with us are thy people, and they that are besieged in the temple are thy priests, I pray that thou wouldst hear the prayer of neither of them against the other.' Hereon they that brought him thither were so enraged against the good man, that they fell upon him with stones, and stoned him to death." If this statement be true, it shows that the besiegers were a superstitious hard-hearted set of people.

At this time Pompey Cneus, afterwards surnamed Magnus (or Pompey the Great), was carrying on a war against Tigranes and Mithridates in Armenia, and a detachment of his army was sent into Syria under the command of Scaurus. This division of Pompey's army was at Damascus, on their way to Judea, when the two brothers, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, each sent to make offers to Scaurus for his assistance. Aristobulus offered the Roman general four hundred talents if he would engage on his side; and Hyrcanus promised him the same sum provided he would come to his assistance. Scaurus deemed it most prudent to accept the offer of Aristobulus, thinking most likely he would be the best paymaster, as he was in possession of the wealth of the temple. He therefore sent orders to Aretas to raise the siege and retire, and if he did not obey, his refusal would be regarded as a declaration of war with Rome. And such was the power, authority, and terror of these Roman generals at that time that Aretas thought it best to obey his command; he therefore raised the siege and commenced marching towards his own country. But as soon as he commenced his retreat, Aristobulus

collected his forces and pursued him, and having overtaken him at a place called Papyrion, a battle ensued, and the army of Aretas was overthrown with great slaughter. In this battle Cephalion, the brother of Antipater, was slain.

About this time Pompey finished his war in Armenia, after which he came to Damascus, and soon reduced Coelo-Syria to a Roman province. And on his return the following year to this province he was met by ambassadors from the Jewish nation, and also by Antipater on behalf of Hyrcanus; and Nicodemus came to represent the cause and claims of Aristobulus. All these representatives earnestly requested Pompey to decide the quarrel between the two brothers. Pompey having heard both sides, and considering it most prudent to waive his conclusions till a more convenient season, gave instructions for Hyrcanus and Aristobulus to appear before him in person, and promised that he would fully consider the subject, and determine on it justly.

The reader, who is not conversant with the history of Pompey, may feel astonished that a matter of such vast importance as deciding who should occupy the throne of a nation, should be submitted for him alone to determine. But at this time Pompey was the master of that part of the world. While he was at Damascus there came unto him no fewer than twelve kings, from the neighbouring nations, to pay homage to him, and these were all seen at the same time attending him as courtiers. Even the Romans, who knew his power and influence among his troops, dreaded his displeasure, and

when he returned from his eastern conquests they were astonished at the sight of his riches and spoils, and delighted with the 20,000 talents which he had brought into the public treasury, and with the increase of the revenues, which were nearly doubled.

After Pompey had heard the statements of the two contending princes, he still delayed giving his decision; on which Aristobulus became alarmed, not knowing how the matter would turn. He therefore deemed it safest to provide for his own security by fortifying and garrisoning the almost impregnable fortress of Alexandrion. When Pompey returned from his Arabian expedition he plainly intimated his intention to support Hyrcanus, for he commanded Aristobulus to surrender all his fortresses into the hands of the Romans. Aristobulus, on receiving this imperious mandate, at once felt his perilous position; but, not willing to quietly yield up all at the bidding of the Roman consul, he fled to Jerusalem and prepared for a desperate resistance. But when he arrived he found the party of Hyrcanus had increased in strength and were prepared to resist him; so he retired to the temple for security, and that sacred edifice, which had so many times been profaned and spoiled, was again prostituted and became the place of human slaughter. Pompey closely pursued the discomfited fugitives, and besieged the holy place with his invincible army. But he found it a difficult matter to make much progress, as only one side of the edifice was at all accessible, and that was defended by strong walls, massy towers, and deep entrenchments. The

place was also skilfully defended by a determined garrison ; so that Pompey soon saw that he could not take it by ordinary means. He therefore employed heavy and powerful engines and immense battering-rams, which he brought from Tyre, and mounted them on vast platforms ; but such was the strength of the fortifications and the activity of the garrison that his efforts appeared fruitless ; and had it not been for the Jews suspending their operations on the Sabbath, which was the day fixed by Pompey for an actual assault, the siege might have been protracted to a much greater length. But as the Jews ceased to defend themselves on that day the besiegers reared their mounds, filled up the ditches, and approached the walls without opposition, when they made a breach, and the Romans, headed by Fansties Sylla (a son of the celebrated Sylla, the dictator), advanced in the assault, and forthwith burst into the temple. On entering the sacred edifice the scene was most horrible and confused. The priests were calmly officiating at the holy altar when the Roman soldiers entered, sword in hand ; and they continued their devotions, while the Jewish soldiers gallantly fought hand to hand with the invading enemy, and 12,000 fell in this awful struggle. When this battle in the temple was over, Pompey entered the polluted edifice with his staff officers, and unceremoniously marched into the Holy of Holies, at which the Jews were horrified and much excited. But while Pompey greatly admired the precious utensils and vast treasures, be it spoken to his honour, he regarded them as sacred and left them

untouched. He was not, like some others who had conquered Jerusalem, guilty of sacrilegious robbery. He ordered the priests to purify the temple, which had again been polluted with blood, and the ceremonies of the Mosaic ritual were performed as though a battle had not been fought and thousands had not been slain. Thus ended this dreadful siege, and the battle of the temple between Pompey and Aristobulus, sixty-three years before Christ.

It has frequently been remarked that the impiety and guilt of Pompey in profaning the Holy Place was the cause of his subsequent downfall and miserable death. "That up to this period of his life he experienced the greatest success in all his undertakings, but after this act of profanation he never prospered, his victory of Jerusalem being the last ever achieved." What is here stated is historically correct, but whether his rash and impious act of entering the "Holy of Holies" was the real cause of the degradation which he afterwards experienced we must leave each reader to judge for himself. Men do not always meet with their just rewards and punishments in this life, *while* in some cases men have been signally punished for singular acts of presumption and insults offered to the Divine Majesty.

When Pompey had taken Jerusalem he restored Hyrcanus to the office of high priest and prince of the country, but prohibited his wearing the diadem and from attempting to extend his dominions beyond the ancient limits of Judea, and thereby deprived him of the cities taken from the Syrians and Phenicians by his prede-

cessors. He also dismantled Jerusalem, and made Judea tributary to the Romans. Having thus settled matters after his conquest, Pompey returned to Rome, taking Aristobulus and his two sons, Alexander and Antigonus, and also two of his daughters, as tokens of the conquest he had achieved. But Alexander made his escape, during their journey to Rome, and returned to Judea, where he succeeded in collecting an army, which afterwards caused the Romans some trouble to suppress.

As we have necessarily spoken of Pompey, and had occasion to refer to his numerous conquests, and may also have occasion to speak of his final degradation and miserable death, it may not be deemed out of place here to make a few distinct remarks respecting this extraordinary man. He was the son of Pompey Strabo and Lucilia. He commenced his career as a military man in early life, and soon distinguished himself for his bravery, courage, and prudence, while fighting under the command of his father, who was a distinguished Roman general. Pompey was also gifted as an orator, and displayed his eloquence by pleading at the bar, on which occasions he frequently received unbounded applause. In the twenty-sixth year of his age he was made commander by Sylla, who was then contending with his rival, Marius. Pompey led out his forces against Marius and his adherents into Sicily, and conquered them; and in forty days he regained all the territories which had forsaken the interest of Sylla, the Roman dictator. He put down the great

revolution in Spain, after which he was made a consul, and in that office he restored the tribunitial power to its original purity. In forty days he removed a number of desperate pirates who infested the Mediterranean Sea, where they had reigned for many years, and almost destroyed the whole naval power of Rome. He next marched into Asia, against two of the most powerful monarchs of the East, and conquered them (Mithridates, king of Pontus, and Tigranes, king of Armenia), and made himself master of Asia by subduing Syria, Armenia, Albania, Iberia, Arabia, Judea, and other provinces.

In an oration which he made before the Roman senate he said he had waged war with twenty-two kings, and had made Asia Proper, which had been the utmost provinces of the Roman dominion, the middle of it, by reason of the many provinces he had conquered beyond it. When he was forty-five years of age his birth-day was solemnized with great pomp and glory, on which occasion there were led before him three hundred and twenty-four of his noble captives, amongst whom were several kings and princes. "It was peculiar in this triumph of his that on his entering the capitol he did not, as other triumphers used to do, put any of his captives to death, neither did he, after his triumph was over, leave any of them in prison, except Aristobulus and Tigranes; all the rest he sent home to their respective countries, at the expense of the public." Up to this period Pompey had shone with unequalled splendour, and had wonderful success in all his under-

takings. Subsequently he sank rapidly both in character and power. Though he married the daughter of Cæsar, and was constituted one of the triumvirs, taking Africa and the two Spains for his portion, he continued to sink, and on the death of Julia, his wife, the political bond with Cæsar was broken. These two great men ultimately met in open battle. After some time fighting Pompey was completely defeated, and had to flee for his life. He obtained a boat, and sailed for the shores of Egypt, expecting to find a friend in Ptolemy. Here he fell into the hands of enemies, and as soon as he landed, he was, by order of the king, cruelly murdered, his head was cut off and sent to Cæsar, but his body was left to perish on the sea shore, without a funeral, where it lay exposed until an old soldier, who had long followed his standard, caused it to be burnt. Such is the brevity and vanity of earthly glory. Pompey was one of the most valiant, and at the same time, the most generous and humane heroes of olden times. He left two sons, Cneus and Sextus; one was slain in an engagement at Munda, when fighting against Cæsar, and the other was put to death by Antony, after being defeated in a naval battle. This terminated the Pompean family.



CHAPTER XXIII.

Hyrcanus ii. Herod made Governor of Galilee.

Restoration of Hyrcanus II.—The policy and power of Antipater—Aretus and Scaurus go to war—Alexander, the son of Aristobulus, makes trouble in Judea—The cities of Samaria rebuilt by Gabinius—Change of government in Judea by Gabinius—Antipater gains favour with the Roman Senate—Gabinius engaged by the famous Mark Antony—Alexander gains power and destroys the Romans in Judea—A terrible battle near Mount Tabar—Crassus made governor of Syria—He marches with an army to Jerusalem to plunder the temple—His shameful conduct—He is miscondacted by a deceiver and slain—The civil war between Cæsar and Pompey—Aristobulus and Alexander, his son, put to death—Antipater gains the favour of Cæsar—The aristocratic constitution in Judea abolished—The four sons of Antipater—Herod made governor of a Judaical province—His daring actions—He is summoned to appear before the Sanhedrim—His conduct before this supreme court—Sameas distinguishes himself—Herod has to flee to Damascus, where he is protected by Sextus Cæsar, and defies the Sanhedrim—Herod obtains the governorship of Cælo-Syria—He marches with an army into Judea with an intention to destroy the Sanhedrim—The fortifications of Jerusalem restored by the permission of Cæsar—The death of Cæsar—His general character.



HE restoration of Hyrcanus to the pontifical office, and to the governorship of Judea, under the restrictions mentioned in the preceding

chapter, reduced the country to a Roman province ; and in reality Hyrcanus was only the nominal governor, while the power was in the hands of Antipater, who, throughout the recent changes, had been a most vigilant and active agent in rendering every event, as far as possible, subservient to his personal advantage and the elevation of his family. This sagacious Idumean still continued to pursue the same course of policy till he had gained his ultimate object, as may be seen in his subsequent conduct.

When Pompey left Syria, Aretas, king of Arabia Petrea, again disturbed the province, which involved Scaurus, the Roman governor of Syria, in a new war with him ; and having marched too far in the desert country, he fell into difficulties for want of supplies. Antipater furnished him with supplies from Judea, and at the same time went to the Arabian king and persuaded him to pay a tribute of three hundred talents to purchase peace with Scaurus. This act impressed the minds of the Romans in his favour, and this was the object of Antipater in all his political actions, in which he was remarkably successful.

We have in the preceding chapter spoken of Alexander, son of Aristobulus, making his escape when on his way to Rome as Pompey's prisoner. As soon as possible he made his way into Judea, and seized the fortresses of Hyrcanus, and with a strong band of rebels ravaged the surrounding country. Gabinius, who was then president of Syria, dispatched Mark Antony to oppose him. Antony united his forces with those of

Hyrcanus and Antipater, and soon compelled the rebel leader to retire out of the field and to take refuge in the fortress of Alexandrium. Gabinius concluded a peace with him on condition of his surrendering the fortress and his other strongholds in the country, which being done, they were demolished, lest they should aid in a future revolt.

The policy of Gabinius, while he remained in office, was to weaken the power of the Jews by establishing a number of independent cities in Judea; hence he gave orders for the rebuilding of Samaria, and several other cities, which had been destroyed by the Maccabeans: these cities were governed by a legally constituted aristocracy. He also reconstructed the form of national government, in which alterations it was changed from the monarchical to the aristocratical, which stripped Hyrcanus of all his princely power, and left him with no other authority than that which was invested in his pontifical office. And in order to place Jerusalem on a level with other cities in Judea, Gabinius altered the courts of judicature, so as to lessen the authority of the capital. Up to this time justice had been administered for the country by two great courts; the lesser court was in every city, viz., there was in every city a subordinate Sanhedrim consisting of twenty-two persons; but the supreme court, which consisted of seventy elected persons, beside the president and his vice, by virtue of office, sat in Jerusalem, and to it the inferior courts could appeal. Gabinius effectually overthrew the superiority of the great Sanhedrim by establishing

five independent courts of equal power and authority. These were respectively held at Jerusalem, Jericho, Amathus, Gadara, and Sepphoris. By this arrangement the power was effectually taken from the prince and Jerusalem, and distributed through the nation among the nobles, and the country had no common centre of union. The secret and yet manifest design of Gabinius was to disunite the nationality, slacken the political bonds which had heretofore united them together, and consequently they would neither be so able nor feel so much inclined to resist the Roman influence and power. These regulations would not pass unobserved by the keen eye of Antipater, who would be led to conclude that he must look to the Roman Senate, or to its official agents, for the promotion of himself and family, rather than to the Jewish prince. As to Hyrcanus, he continued tamely to submit to the powers that existed, whether in the person of his younger brother, the president of Syria, or in the Roman senate; so that he could but lead a quiet life he desired no more. It seems a pity that his imbecility and desire for peace should have been taken advantage of by ambitious and designing men, whose aim was to raise themselves by making him a tool, as in the case of Antipater and his son Herod.

In the year 56 B.C. the Jews were involved in a war, in which Antipater signalized himself in favour of the Roman interest. It is necessary to distinctly notice these particulars, as they were associated with the rise of the Herodian dynasty, and the condition of the Jewish

state, and church, just previous to the incarnation of our blessed Saviour.

Ptolemy, the dethroned king of Egypt, offered Gabinius the Syrian governor, 10,000 talents to re-establish him in his kingdom. The reward being very great, Gabinius undertook the enterprise immediately, gave up his Parthian expedition, in which he was then engaged with Mithridates, re-crossed the Euphrates, and marched his army through Palestine directly towards Egypt. "When Gabinius arrived on the borders of Egypt, he sent Antony with a body of horse to seize the passes and open the way for the rest of the army to follow." So it appears, in this expedition the famous Mark Antony, who was afterwards one of the triumvirs of Rome, accompanied Gabinius. Most likely at this time he was the chief general of the Syrian cavalry.

At that time the Jews in Egypt were a powerful body, and to them Antipater addressed a letter, with a view to influence them to assist the invading army; this letter had its effect, and the Syrian arms were successful.

After Gabinius had accomplished his Egyptian task, for which he received the above-mentioned sum, he hastened back into Syria, which he found in great disorder, his young and inexperienced son, whom he left to govern the people during his absence, being incompetent for the task. The country was overrun with freebooters and banditti, and Alexander, the son of Aristobulus, taking advantage of this disorder raised a great army, with whom he ranged through the country, slew all the Romans he could meet with,

and furiously drove the rest into refuge and hiding places.

The wily and prudent Idumean was again employed by Gabinius to induce the rebels to ground their arms on terms of pardon; for Gabinius was ill prepared to put them down by force of arms. Antipater prevailed on many of them to submit, but Alexander, having collected about him 30,000 men, resolved to stand to his arms and give Gabinius battle in open contest. The two armies accordingly met near mount Tabar, where a bloody battle was desperately fought. The Jewish prince was defeated, 10,000 of his adherents were slain, and the rest were scattered before the victorious army of Gabinius. After this victory Gabinius went to Jerusalem, and settled matters there much to the satisfaction of Antipater; after which he returned to Syria, and after staying there for a short time he went to Rome, and Crassus was made governor of Syria.

This Crassus was originally a slave dealer, by which means he realised immense wealth, and was called "Crassus, the rich." His cruelties obliged him to leave Rome and seek refuge in Africa. He afterwards returned, and was engaged by Sylla to put down the insurrection raised by the gladiators in Italy. In this undertaking he was successful. He was made consul with Pompey, and formed the first triumvirate with Pompey and Cæsar, in which capacity he took the eastern division of the Roman empire, of which Syria was the principal province. He was a man of extremely avaricious principles through life, being determined to amass all the wealth he was able, by any means in his power, whether

just or unjust. And being told of the riches contained in the temple at Jerusalem, he deliberately marched with part of his army to plunder the sacred edifice. At that time Eleazar, one of the priests, was treasurer of the temple, who amongst other things had under his charge a bar of gold, of great value, which was concealed in a beam that was made hollow for its reception; this beam was placed over the entrance into the "Holy of Holies," and was covered by the veil of the temple. Eleazar, in the simplicity of his heart, not knowing the villanage of this visitor, nor regarding him as a public robber, endeavoured to satiate his thirst for gold by telling him he had a bar of that precious metal under his care, of immense value, and if he would spare the sacred utensils and other precious things of the temple, he would deliver the bar to him. Crassus promised, and swore that he would be content if the bar was delivered to him, and would not meddle with any thing else. But as soon as the perfidious scoundrel had got possession of the beam containing the valuable treasure, he unhesitatingly violated his oath, grasped the 2,000 talents which the noble and generous Pompey had left untouched, ransacked the temple in every part, and robbed it of 8,000 talents in value, more. This infamous sacrilegious plunderer carried away from the house of God 10,000 talents, equal to *two million pounds* sterling. After this spoliation of the Jewish temple, he robbed an heathen temple in Syria, from which he took a vast amount of wealth. Soon afterwards he was cut off in battle, together with his son, by the Parthians. When

retreating from the enemy he was misconducted by a person, designing to deceive him, into a bog, where he was slain by Surenas. It is said "this was the greatest defeat the Romans ever had since the battle of Cannæ." But it was quite as good as they deserved for employing such a base man as Crassus either to rule a province or to fight their battles. It is said that when the head of this sacrilegious robber was carried to Orodes, he caused melted gold to be poured into his mouth by way of mockage, as if by this he would satisfy his thirst for gold.

In the year 49 B.C. a civil war commenced in the Roman empire, between Cæsar and Pompey, when Cæsar released Aristobulus out of prison and sent him with two legions to promote his interest in Judea, but Pompey contrived to have him poisoned on his way thither; and Alexander, his son, who, expecting the arrival of his father, had raised forces in Judea to assist him, was seized by Scipio, president of Syria, and put to death.

In this civil war Antipater again assisted Cæsar in the siege of Pelusium and other engagements in Egypt, after the death of Pompey, for which services he was well rewarded by the Roman conqueror. Cæsar also restored Hyrcanus to supreme authority, abolished the aristocratic constitution established by Gabinius, and appointed Antipater procurator of Judea, under Hyrcanus. This Idumean politician acquired such influence in Judea, by his skill and prudence, as led the Roman government to put a high value on his services and to confer on his family great and distinguished honours.

Antipater had four sons, whom he had taken care to have well educated, and when they grew up to manhood they became men of great repute, both for valour and wisdom. The eldest was named Phasael, who was appointed governor of Jerusalem; the second son was Herod, who was appointed governor of Galilee; his other two sons, Joseph and Pheroras, were not of such high repute, and created serious disturbances in the family.

The elevation of Antipater and his family became offensive to the Jews, especially to the aristocratic party, some of whom would no doubt think they were entitled to hold offices in preference to foreign noblemen. Hyrcanus not having capacity to govern, the whole administrative authority and power were in the hands of Antipater and his two aspiring sons, Phasael and Herod. The latter especially excited the jealousy of the Jewish nobles, who seemed to properly estimate his character and designs. Herod soon made no secret of his determination to rule with authority the province allotted to his government. The first of his daring actions was that of putting to death the leader and chief of a band of robbers, who infested his district, on his own authority, without any formal trial, or the sanction of any judicial court. Although he was only the governor of a small province he commenced a rule of despotism. For this act he was summoned to appear before the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem to answer for his conduct. Herod obeyed the summons; but he appeared before that venerable and august tribunal in such a manner

that seemed to bid defiance to their authority over him. He was clothed in purple, attended with a number of his armed guards, and bearing a threatening letter from the Syrian president, which commanded the Sanhedrim to acquit him. The court was so overawed by this document, and the general behaviour of Herod on the occasion, that the whole assembly remained for some time silent, as if confounded, or afraid to take any action in the case. At length Sameas, who was a man of great courage and integrity, broke the silence by charging him with the crime for which he was indicted, and also with presumption for appearing before the Sanhedrim attended with his guards. He proceeded to address the court, upbraiding the members, and especially the high priest, for their cowardice in permitting Herod thus to act, and in conclusion he predicted the growing power of Herod, and intimated that the day was approaching when he would overbear and destroy the Sanhedrim, which afterwards came to pass, for when Herod was made king of Judea he put them all to death except Sameas and Pollio. The speech of Sameas aroused the court, and the major part of the members seemed inclined to condemn Herod, but Hyrcanus did all he could to obtain his acquittal, and when he failed he adjourned the court till the next day. During the night Herod made his escape to Damascus, where he put himself under the protection of his patron and friend, Sextus Cæsar, president of Syria, and feeling himself secure he defied the Sanhedrim, and boldly told them that he should appear before that court no

more to answer for his conduct. This took place forty-seven years before Christ, and the year following Herod obtained the government of Cœle-Syria. Most likely this grant was made to him through the influence of Sextus Cæsar, who was bribed with a sum of money.

Having here mentioned the Sanhedrim, as the supreme court of justice among the Jews, it may be necessary to make a few remarks in reference to its constitution and character. It is impossible to strictly date its original formation, but that it actually existed at the time Herod was appointed governor of Galilee there can be no doubt, and it is equally certain that there is no satisfactory evidence that it existed anterior to the rise of the Maccabees. We are aware that some writers, both Jews and Christians, have attempted to trace the origin of the Sanhedrim to the seventy elders who were chosen, by divine appointment, to assist Moses in governing the the Israelites during their sojourns in the wilderness. This opinion however is without substantial evidence to support it. The elders, who constituted the Mosaic council, were appointed for a special purpose, having functions and powers for a temporary period, so as to assist Moses, and bear a portion of responsibility in relation to government. Had this council been perpetuated during the period of the judges and the ancient Hebrew monarchy, there certainly would have been some reference made to it in the Old Testament, which is not the case. This silence, we think, may be regarded as decisive evidence against its existence after the Jews entered the land of Canaan; because numerous

circumstances occurred in which such a council must have acted had it been in existence.

The Sanhedrim might be intended as an imitation of the Mosaic council of elders, but it was nevertheless a different institution, being more judicial in its character and differently constituted. It was the supreme court of judicature. Its members were selected from the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes; its president uniformly being the high priest. When the council assembled, the members were so seated as to form a semi-circle with the president in the centre, on whose right sat the vice-president, and on his left the second vice-president. The authority of the Sanhedrim was very great and extensive, for it adjudicated on the affairs of both church and state, and was the final court of appeal from the decisions of the lesser Sanhedrims. But when Judea was reduced by the Roman senate to a province, this court was prohibited from inflicting capital punishment, the execution of such a sentence was placed wholly in the hands of the Roman governor.

Herod, having increased in power, got together a military force and marched with it into Judea, with an intention to revenge himself on the members of the Sanhedrim for their late process against him. From this rash and impolitic act he was dissuaded by his father and brother, who seasonably interposed and caused him to desist from the attempt. Soon after this circumstance important changes took place in the Roman empire, which might have checked the rising power of Antipater and that of his aspiring sons: this

however was not the case. They managed by artful policy to keep in favour with those who had power to keep them in office.

In the year 44 B.C. Hyrcanus, most likely at the instigation of Antipater, requested Cæsar to allow him to repair the walls of Jerusalem and restore its fortifications, which had been thrown down and destroyed by Pompey. This request was readily granted, in consideration of the service which the Jews had rendered to the Roman consuls in Egypt and Syria; and the decree of the Senate being proclaimed in Jerusalem, Antipater immediately set about the work with his usual activity; and he soon restored the fortifications to their former condition.

In this year Cæsar was murdered in the senate-house by a conspiracy of senators, under the pretext of freeing the country from a tyrant. The guilty parties were Marcus Brutus, Decimus Brutus, Cassius, and Trebonius, all men whom the chief consul had greatly obliged, particularly Marcus Brutus, of whom he bitterly complained in his dying agonies. All these conspirators were shortly afterwards cut off in a violent manner. Cæsar was a man of extraordinary parts, a man of polite literature, and thoroughly skilled in the art of war and civil government. He was also a man of great enterprise, industry, and ambition. According to history he fought fifty successful battles, in which were slain 1,192,000 men. He must therefore have been either a great ambitious tyrant, or a terrible scourge in the hand of God for the punishment of the wicked of the age in

which he lived. Taking a survey of his whole life, and the general character of those who lived in his time, and who fell or suffered through his terrible inflictions, he may be regarded as both. It is not our business, however, to describe the character of Cæsar, or to give a description of his military and political transactions; such things belong to Roman history and select biography.





CHAPTER XXIV.

Herod Raised to Kingly Authority.



The changes which took place on the death of Cæsar in the Roman provinces—Herod, Antipater, and Malichus—Malichus causes the death of Antipater—Herod murders Malichus—A factious party rises to avenge the death of Malichus—Hyrcanus again in trouble—Antigonus makes an effort to obtain the throne of Judea—He is subdued by Herod—The great battle of Philippi, which decided the fate of Brutus and Cassius—Antony in great power—Herod obtains the favour of Antony—Antigonus still contends for the supreme government of Judea—Herod narrowly escapes with his life to the fortress of Mount Masada—The Parthians compass Jerusalem and proclaim Antigonus king of Judea—Hyrcanus taken by the Parthians, who cut off his ears, and thus disqualify him for the priest's office—Herod has an interview with Octavius and Antony at Rome—Herod's special design in going to Rome—Herod nominated king of Judea by Octavius and Antony—Herod returns to Judea, relieves the fortress of Masada, and subdues the disaffected parties—Herod's marriage with Marianne, a princess of the Maccabean family—He came to Jerusalem with an army and unites with Sosius the Syrian governor in the siege—Terrible fighting in Jerusalem—The city taken—Antigonus totally defeated, taken captive, and put to an ignominious death—The prediction relative to the sceptre departing from Judah considered—Herod takes possession of Jerusalem and commences his reign—Menahem the Essenian prophet.



It is only reasonable to suppose that the death, by murder, of such a man as Cæsar, would give rise to a great confusion and disturbance

throughout his dominions; which according to historians was the case. There soon appeared three parties contending for the supreme power which was possessed by the murdered monarch, viz., Antony, Brutus and his party, and Octavius, maternal nephew of Cæsar. Antony took the lead, in full assurance of success, by making an oration at Cæsar's funeral, in which he so greatly excited the people against the murderers that they were obliged to abruptly leave the city and the government in the hands of Antony, who was then consul. But Octavius, on hearing that his uncle was murdered, immediately came into Italy, declared himself the adopted son and heir of Cæsar, and soon succeeded in drawing around him a powerful army, at the head of which he entered Rome, and took upon himself the execution of his uncle's will. A controversy then arose between him and Antony, as to which should succeed Cæsar in his power and authority. The adopted son, though only eighteen years of age, obtained the favour and support of the people and soldiers; therefore, Antony thought it safest to quit Rome, and leave the young prince in the sole mastery of both the senate and the people. This defeat at Rome, however, did not subdue his ambition; he resolved on making the event of Cæsar's death subservient to his own elevation and power. He marched off with all the troops he could collect together that adhered to his interest, to *Gabria Cisalpina*, with an intention to dispossess *Decimus Brutus* of that province, and seize it for himself. In the interim war broke out in various parts of the

empire, which extended to Syria and Palestine. These wars gave rise to a taxation in Judea, as well as in other parts of the Roman dominion, to maintain the large army necessarily kept in Syria. Antipater embraced this opportunity of showing his loyalty by taking care that the tax money of his province was forthcoming in due time. Phasaël, Herod, and Malichus were appointed by Antipater to raise certain sums in their respective districts. Herod was the first who brought his quota, and thereby much recommended himself to the Syrian governor. Malichus could not raise his required amount, and would have been put to death by Cassius for failing in this matter, had he not been redeemed with one hundred talents sent by Hyrcanus.

Having referred to Malichus, it may be necessary to state a few particulars concerning him, especially so as his conduct gave rise to important events. He was a Jew, and next in power and authority to Antipater, the Idumean. These two men were the principal supporters of the interest of Hyrcanus against Aristobulus and his sons. Antipater became in the eyes of Malichus an object of rivalry, he therefore conceived a design of ridding him out of the way, that he might take his place, and then crush his aspiring sons, Phasaël and Herod. It is probable that in this project he was backed and stimulated by a party of Jews, who abhorred the idea of an Idumean ruling over them. For the accomplishment of this design Malichus laid a plot to take away the life of Antipater, but it failed to succeed; then, on oath, he protested he was innocent. Antipater

and his sons so far believed him that they became reconciled to him, and when Marcus would have put him to death for the offence, they interceded for him and saved his life. But notwithstanding this obligation under which he was laid to the Idumean family, he was so intent on his purpose of removing Antipater that he shortly afterwards bribed the butler to give him poison in his wine, of which he drank and died. Malichus immediately raised an armed force and seized the government of Jerusalem. Such a movement was sufficient to convict him of the supposed crime, but he nevertheless declared to Phasaël and Herod that he was not the cause of their father's death. At this declaration Herod was so indignant that he would have immediately executed revenge, but was deterred by the consideration that it might involve a civil war, and frustrate his own designs; he therefore dissembled his resentment by professing to believe him. Cassius, being informed by Herod how his father had come by his death, gave him permission to revenge it on the murderer at the first opportunity, which Herod failed not to execute. Malichus was slain near Tyre by a party commissioned by Herod for that purpose. It is thought that the design of Malichus was to get his son from Tyre, where he was as a hostage, and then to return into Judea and stimulate the Jews to a revolt; then seize the country while the Romans were embroiled in war, and make himself king, but through this plot of Herod's his plan miscarried and his life was lost. Thus ended the days of this crafty and hypocritical Jew; but

his death did not put an end to the jealousy which existed among the Malichus party against the Idumean family, who were gradually rising to ruling power and civil authority, as the following circumstances will prove.

The year following the death of Malichus, Cassius being induced to leave Syria to assist Brutus against Octavius, in Macedonia, a factious party of discontented Jews rose in arms to avenge the death of Malichus upon the sons of Antipater, and they so far succeeded as to gain over Hyrcanus to their side, and likewise Felix, the commander of the Roman forces at Jerusalem, and thereby got possession of several castles in Judea. Herod at this time was at Damascus, laid up with sickness; consequently Phasaël had to contend alone with the revolting party; he was nevertheless successful. He drove Felix and his party out of Jerusalem, and when Herod recovered and came to his assistance, they unitedly soon subdued this faction in every part of the country. Poor Hyrcanus quietly submitted to the severe censures passed upon him by the two victorious brothers, and was no doubt glad to escape without penal chastisement, which would most likely have been his lot had not Herod been on the point of marrying Mariamne, the grand-daughter of Hyrcanus. Herod being set upon this scheme wished, as far as possible, just at this time to preserve peace in the family.

The factious party was only suppressed, not extinguished. They soon again rallied their forces and invited

Antigonus, the only surviving son of Aristobulus, to become their leader, and claimed for him the kingdom and throne of Judea. This claim was also supported by the king of Tyre, the governor of Damascus, and Prince Ptolemy of Chalcis, who had married the sister of Antigonus. These united forces Herod encountered on their entering Judea, totally overthrew them, and returned to Jerusalem in triumph.

The next year, *i. e.*, 41 B.C., was fought the memorable battle of Phillipi, which decided the fate of Brutus and Cassius. Antony is regarded as having gained this victory, when he immediately went into Asia to settle matters of interest in reference to himself and Octavius. Antony was now regarded as a very great and influential man, just approaching the zenith of his earthly glory; but his sensuality was unbounded, which ultimately proved his final ruin. When he came into Asia his council-chamber was thronged with kings and princes of the oriental provinces and nations who came to pay their homage to him, and, disgraceful to say, some of them, in order to gain his favour, brought their wives and daughters, and allowed them to be prostituted to his carnal gratification. Amongst the ambassadors who came to him were a number of Jews, deputed by the Jewish nation to complain of the usurpation of Herod and Phasael, whom they accused in the most formidable manner; yet all to no purpose, for Herod, being present, gained the favour of Antony, partly by bribery and partly by reminding him of the service which his father had rendered him under Gabi-

nius in Judea. Antony therefore disregarded the accusations made by the Jews, made Phasael and Herod tetrarchs of Judea, and committed the whole province to their government. Shortly after this, at the request of Hyrcanus, he restored to the Jews the lands and territories which Cassius had taken from them, and the persons whom that tyrant had sold into slavery were set free.

The vigilance and skilful policy of Herod had so far enabled him to defeat Cassius, and his way to future promotion seemed open before him; but his troubles were not yet ended. Antigonus was still very restless, and determined, if possible, to wear the crown once possessed by his father, and which gloriously flourished on the head of his grandfather. He therefore began to look out for foreign assistance to enable him to compete with his opponents. Pacorus, the Parthian general, having taken Sidon and Ptolemais, was induced by an offer of 1,000 talents and 500 Jewish women to assist Antigonus in his claims to the throne. For this purpose a formidable army of Parthians came into Judea and united with the forces of Antigonus, whom he had collected from Mount Carmel and other places where the people had become disaffected towards Phasael and Herod. The two armies fought each other for a while with alternate success in many skirmishes, when the Parthians had recourse to treachery, by which they succeeded in getting Hyrcanus and Phasael in their possession, whom they made prisoners. Herod narrowly escaped with his life to a strong fortress built on the

top of a high mountain in Masada. On his way thither he had several skirmishes with the enemy, over whom he had the advantage, and when he was in this strong fortress, which was well garrisoned, he bade them defiance. Here Herod afterwards built a famous palace, which he called Herodium, in memory of this important event.

When the Parthians found Herod had fled from Jerusalem they plundered the city and surrounding country, and proclaimed Antigonus king of Judea. Phasael, knowing his doom, to prevent his execution beat out his brains against the prison walls. The life of Hyrcanus was spared, but, in order to incapacitate him for the office of high priest, Antigonus caused his ears to be cut off, and then delivered him up to the Parthians, who carried him to Seleucia. After Herod had arranged matters with his brother Joseph, who came to his assistance against the Parthians, he left his female relations with Mariamne, his intended wife, at Masada, and went to Rome, to state his condition to Octavius and Mark Antony, *who had become reconciled*, and to procure their assistance. It is thought by some historians that the object Herod had in going to Rome was to get Aristobulus, the brother of Mariamne, placed on the throne, with a view of governing under him, as his father, Antipater, had governed under Hyrcanus. But what arrangements were privately made between Herod and Antony in relation to this matter we cannot safely say. One thing is recorded which throws some doubt on the subject, viz., "For the sake of a great sum of

money which Herod promised Antony he undertook to help him, and procured for him the crown, which was afterwards given him, contrary to the custom of the Romans in such cases; for they used not to pass over the royal line of any dependent kingdom and grant the crown to one that was not allied to it. But Octavius was prevailed on to favour the design, partly to gratify Antony and partly out of gratitude to the family of Antipater for the help he had afforded to Julius Cæsar." Therefore, for the above reasons, Herod was nominated by Octavius and Antony king of Judea, which was confirmed by the unanimous suffrage of the whole Senate; and Antigonus was declared to be an enemy to the Roman State. "Herod, on rising from the Senate, was conducted by the consuls and other magistrates up to the capitol, where he was solemnly inaugurated as king of Judea, according to the Roman usage." Herod was thus legally constituted, by the masters of the world, king of Judea, 40 B.C. In three years afterwards he took possession of Jerusalem and the kingdom. Having attained this high honour he returned by way of Brundisium, where his ship was waiting for him, and he landed at Ptolemais, after an absence of three months. His first object was to relieve the fortress in Masada, where his relations were shut up; for during his absence Antigonus had besieged the castle, and they were in great distress for want of water, so much so that Joseph, who had command of the garrison, had resolved to break through the besiegers and flee into Arabia, where he thought they should be befriended by Malchus.

Herod, on being informed of the condition of the garrison, immediately set himself about raising men by every possible means, and without delay hastened to their relief. He soon succeeded in raising the siege, and found all his friends alive. This was a renewal of his war with Antigonius, which continued three years. During this period Herod had much trouble, occasioned both by avowed enemies and false friends. Silo, who engaged, with his army, to assist him, was a selfish man, who did him more harm than good, his only object being to obtain money to support his army and enrich himself. Herod determined on and succeeded in taking the cities of Joppa and Sepphoris, and recovering the province of Galilee and Idumea, and also in totally exterminating the numerous banditti who infested the country and committed great and numerous depredations. Having mastered a considerable part of the country he determined on taking Jerusalem, and with it the whole kingdom. But previous to this important undertaking he deemed it prudent, as a matter of policy, as well as to promote his own comfort, to celebrate his nuptials with Mariamne, to whom he had for some time been betrothed. This lady was a descendant of the Maccabean family, she was the daughter of Alexander, who was the son of King Aristobulus, and the granddaughter of Hyrcanus, the high priest. She is spoken of as being a lady of peculiar charms, of unblemished reputation, and extraordinary mental endowments. The Jews generally held the family of the Asmoneans, or Maccabeans, in high esteem, and therefore Herod

thought that by marrying this lady he should, in some measure, reconcile the Jews to himself, and they might be disposed to yield to his claims rather than be forced to submit by a protracted siege. If these were his views he was mistaken, for the Jews held out against him as long as they were able, thereby showing their aversion for an Idumean to rule over them.

After Herod had consummated his union with the Maccabean family, he returned to his army, then encamped before Jerusalem, and in union with Sosius, the Syrian governor, they commenced the siege. Sosius had under his command eleven legions. With these the Herodian army united and constituted such an overwhelming force that no reasonable doubts could be entertained with regard to their ultimate success. The Jews nevertheless defended the city and themselves with great determination, as though they were resolved not to submit to an army of idolatrous invaders, headed by an Idumean usurper, whom they utterly detested. They therefore fought desperately, and for five months were proof against all the operations of the combined forces of Herod and the Roman legions. At length the lower part of the city was taken, and the besieged fled for refuge within the higher walls, which inclosed the temple, where they for a while defended themselves against the enemy. After a desperate struggle the signal was given for a general assault, and the troops entered the city on every side, while Sosius encouraged the soldiers to commit slaughter and plunder unsparingly. The Romans, as might be expected, were most

desperate in their devastations. Herod, for his own interest, was more moderate, and at length interposed on behalf of the Jews, or rather on behalf of himself, saying if Sosius thus proceeded with his work of destruction he should be left monarch only of the bare walls. He therefore requested him to put a stop to the ravage and cruelty which reigned. But as the spoils of the city, according to martial laws, were due to the soldiers who had taken it, he was therefore obliged to buy them off from further plunder by granting them a sum of money from his own treasures ; he thus redeemed the city from utter ruin, by which means he benefited himself under the plausible pretexts of humanity and generosity. When Antipater instigated Hyrcanus to obtain the sanction of the senate to rebuild the fortifications of the city, he little thought his own son would be the first whose task it would be to breach them in order to effectually obtain the crown and make himself master of the country.

Antigonus, defeated and broken down in spirit, surrendered himself to Sosius, and submissively implored his compassion. But the Roman general rejected him with utter contempt, despised his cowardice and meanness of spirit, and by way of scorn designated him *Antigona*, to denote that his conduct was unmanly and more befitting the weakness of a woman. He then ordered him to be put in chains, and sent to Antony to receive his sentence. Poor Antigonus had fallen into bad hands. Antony was the friend and patron of Herod, secured by large sums of money, which the Idumean

continued to lavish upon him; therefore to satisfy Herod, Antigonus was put to an ignominious death, after the manner of a common criminal, viz., “by the rod and axe of the lictor, to which the Romans never before subjected any crowned head.” This cruel act terminated the Maccabean dynasty, which commenced with the noble and heroic Judas Maccabeus, and continued one hundred and twenty-nine years. During this period the Jewish nation had undergone many changes, bravely withstood many invading armies, fought by its armies many battles, and won many glorious victories. But now the sceptre and crown of Jewish monarchs have fallen to rise no more, till the far off distant period arrives when the kingdom shall be re-established in the person of some Jewish Christian. Herod, the Idumean, was now king of the Jews, and speedily rose to possess imperial power and authority.

In what sense then are we to understand the prophecy of Jacob? “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the law-giver from between his feet until Shiloh come.” This, unquestionably, is an inspired prediction, and is to be understood in relation to the regal power of Judah and the coming of Christ, and that Judah shall, in some sense, possess a kingly power until Messiah makes his appearance; we shall, therefore, endeavour to trace out its prophetic meaning.

Some learned commentators, who have professed to chronologically trace out, in detail, the fulfilment of this ambiguous prophecy, have attempted to prove that the descendants of Judah possessed regal and adminis-

trative power from the formation of the Jewish nation until the coming of Christ. We think, however, this view of the subject is too literal, and cannot be regarded as historically correct. Moses, the first governor and law-giver of the Hebrews, was not of the tribe of Judah, but of Levi. Several of the judges were not of the tribe of Judah, neither was Saul the first king of Israel. And after the captivity, the high priests had the regency of the nation, as well as the supreme ecclesiastical office ; and it is well known that the Maccabean princes were of the tribe of Levi, and they reigned in Judea till the rise of Herod, who was an Idumean. But we are told that “ the Sanhedrim was principally constituted of the tribe of Judah, and that this court held the sceptre, for the other courts were dependent upon it, and subject thereto.” Supposing this to be correct, we cannot be satisfied as to when the Sanhedrim was originally formed, and we know that after its formation its power was sometimes limited, and at one time there were several such courts in Judea, of equal power and authority, as we have already shown in the case of the regulations made by Gabinius. We think, therefore, the prophecy does not signify that there shall be *of the tribe of Judah*, at all times, a man, or a number of men, who shall rule and govern the nation till the coming of the Messiah. But it may signify

1. That the tribe of Judah shall remain compact, and represent the Jewish nation until the coming of the Saviour. This was certainly the case. The ten tribes who revolted in the reign of Rehoboam, under the lea-

dership of Jeroboam, were scattered before the Babylonish captivity among the various nations of the East, while Judah remained, as the Jewish nation, governed by a line of kings of the house and lineage of David, and to them were joined the Levites, as stated in 2 Chron. xi. 13—"The priests and the Levites that were in all Israel left their suburbs and their possessions and came to Judah and Jerusalem." The tribe of Benjamin also remained with Judah, and these two tribes after the captivity were comprehended in Judah, only there was a religious distinction in relation to the Levites, who supplied the office of priesthood. By Judah then we are to understand the Jews generally who composed the Hebrew nation subsequent to the revolt; for Jacob, in this prophecy, foretells what should befall the tribes in the last days of the Jewish nationality, when, at least, some of his prophetic events took place.

2. This prophecy, we think, signifies that *Judah*, in the sense we have defined the term, shall be governed by their own rulers, or men of the Jewish race, until the coming of Christ. And this is historically true, for the Maccabean princes were of Judah in this sense; though genealogically of Levi, they were included in Judah. And as to Herod, who reigned in Judea after the Asmonean princes, although an Idumean he was a proselyte, and thereby grafted into the Jewish stock. In other words, he was an adopted son of Judah. And we may just add that Nicolas of Damascus, who lived in Herod's court, says "Herod was a descendant of a Jewish family." This, however, is very questionable,

and remains to be proved. But, leaving this point as doubtful, we have sufficient historical evidence, when rightly understood, to prove the correctness of this remarkable and important prediction. The sceptre and lawgiver remained among the Jews until the nation was reduced to a Roman province, which took place, not when Christ was born, but when he was about twelve years of age, just at the time when he first came to the temple on his "Father's business," to publicly indicate his Messiahship; or it might be at the time the Emperor Augustus took away the kingly power from Archelaus, soon after the death of Herod, and gave him the inferior title of Ethrarch, which signifies merely the chief of a nation, without either crown or sceptre. This explanation may be rejected by some, but, after reading many opinions on the subject, it is the best we can offer.

It was in the year 37 B.C. that Herod took possession of Jerusalem and thoroughly established himself as king of the Jews. This event is looked upon by the Jewish historian as a fulfilment of a prediction uttered by one Menahem, a member of the sect of the Essenes, on which he relates a rather curious story. He says, "this man had the knowledge of future events given to him by God. When Herod was young this man saluted him as king of the Jews, and predicted that he would commence his reign happily, for God had found that he was worthy of it." And he assigns this as the reason of his divine appointment, because "he loved justice towards men, had piety towards God, and clemency towards his citizens." This Menahem had an interview

with Herod after he was made king, to whom he predicted that he would reign in Judea more than thirty years, and that he should excel all men in happiness and obtain an everlasting reputation, but at the conclusion of his life would forget righteousness, and God would punish him for his crime. Such, in substance, is the statement of Josephus, and copied by many other historians as genuine, without any remarks or comment. But we really cannot receive the above as a divine prediction, or as a knowledge of future events imparted to Menahem by God.

1. Because Herod did not commence his reign happily, but otherwise, in confusion and the shedding of human blood.

2. He was not a worthy character, but otherwise; he abused his power and destroyed the Sanhedrim without any just cause.

3. He was notoriously unjust towards his fellow-men.

4. He seemed totally destitute of piety towards God.

5. He never manifested clemency towards his fellow-citizens or to his subjects save in one case, but oppressed, grieved, and punished them.

6. It is true that he reigned more than thirty years, but so far from excelling all men in happiness, he was generally of all men the most miserable, and at times his crimes drove him to melancholy and madness. His ambitious soul, like the troubled sea, was scarcely ever at rest.

7. He did not obtain an everlasting reputation for honour and good character, for his name stands on the

pages of profane and sacred history as a man notorious for duplicity, crime, and cruelty.

8. He did not forget piety and righteousness, but totally neglected them both all the days of his life. His object in rebuilding the temple was evidently a political scheme to gain the favour of the Jews, whose religious feelings he had outraged with his paganism and apostacy.

9. It is true that he was divinely punished in his conscience and in his miserable death, on account of his extraordinary impiety and committing deliberate murders of his near relations, the innocent babes of Bethlehem, and many others. In comparing this prediction of Menahem with Herod's life we cannot see much truth in it, and therefore cannot regard it as "given by God," but class it with Jewish fables and curious stories. If the reader sees differently he can enjoy his own opinion; the story is of no vital importance.





CHAPTER XXV.

Herod the Great—Events of His Life.



The conduct of Herod on his obtaining the crown of Judea—How he stood in the estimation of his subjects—His cruelty towards those who opposed him—He puts to death the members of the Sanhedrim—He is charged with being a public robber under cover of supreme authority—Some apology to be allowed for Herod's conduct—His policy and cruelty in filling the pontifical chair—Hyrchanus returns to Jerusalem, and takes up his abode with Herod—Aristobulus, Herod's brother-in-law, entitled to the high priesthood, but Herod appoints Ananelus—The queen of Egypt interferes, on which Herod deposes Ananelus and appoints Aristobulus—Attempts made by Alexandra to secure the crown for Aristobulus—Herod in a critical position—The death of Aristobulus caused by Herod—Herod's hypocrisy at the funeral of Aristobulus—Is summoned by Antony to give an account of his conduct—Is again in trouble—The case of Herod giving orders for Mariamne to be put to death—She loses all affection for him for ever—The conduct of Salome, Herod's sister, towards Mariamne—The doubtful story of the notorious Cleopatra and Herod—Herod again in great difficulties, his adventure with Augustus—His success—His family troubles increase—He puts Mariamne to death—The shameful conduct of Alexandra towards her daughter, the condemned queen, through fear of Herod—Death of Hyrchanus.



THE first act of Herod, after being seated on the throne, was in perfect harmony both in spirit and character with the last actions of

his impious and irregular life, which, taken on the whole, presents to us one of the most terrific pictures of human depravity on record. He was nevertheless a man of superior education and intellectual endowments, and on most occasions, when ability was required, he gave evidence of his prudence and carnal policy, which were on some occasions blended with a show of honesty and generosity. But in all his movements we may discover a steady and unwavering aim to raise himself to dignity and power. In the character of Herod may be seen, at different periods of his life, all the elements of consummate selfishness, wrought up into action by the spirit of ambition, and regulated by the accomplished skill of the most adept politician. This will be seen in relating a few particular actions of his life. We have already shown that Herod, before obtaining the crown of Judea, had to make his way to the throne, not only by the exercise of his superior mental powers, but also by the shedding of much blood, and the sacrifice of a large amount of human life, by which he incurred the displeasure of the people over whom he was about to reign. Many of the Jews, though obliged to bow to his imperial sway, hated him, and could not be induced to own him as their rightful sovereign, especially while Antigonus was alive, whom they still regarded as their king. This hostile feeling led him to hasten the death of the captive prince, which he no doubt accomplished by feeing Antony with a sum of money to give orders for his speedy execution. He next turned his revenge upon the party who had

opposed him, and daily put some of them to death, amongst whom were the counsellors of the great Sanhedrim, except Pollio and the famous Someas. These two, foreseeing the result of the strife between Herod and Antigonus, declared throughout the whole siege in favour of Herod, or at least their willingness to receive him as king. They seemed to think that Herod was raised up by the hand of God to rule over and punish the Jews for their apostacy and wickedness. But the other members of the supreme court thought God would defend them for the sake of his holy temple, and its divine institutions.

Herod continued to follow up his murderous operations until he had exterminated, as far as possible, all who had adhered to the vanquished prince. He also confiscated their property and estates; moreover he is charged with being a public robber, by "violently seizing whatever treasures he could find in Jerusalem, without condescending to regard the claims or listening to the representations of the owners of such property." These are certainly very grave and heavy charges against a king, and it is possible to bear too heavily even upon Herod. We must remember that when the city was taken by the Roman legions, under the command of Sosius, and when the soldiers commenced to plunder the inhabitants, Herod bought them off, and redeemed the city from utter ruin. He might therefore consider himself justifiable in seizing their treasures afterwards to repay himself. This is the most favourable view we can take of the subject. And perhaps the

inhabitants suffered less by being robbed by Herod, than they would have suffered had they been plundered and spoiled by the victorious and infuriated Romans.

Beside, Herod was in great need of money at that time, to buy favour and secure the perpetuity of his crown. The chiefs of the Roman empire, whose influence had placed Herod on the throne, would certainly expect a liberal acknowledgment of their favour after the siege was over, and if their expectations had not been met most likely Herod would have been in danger of being dethroned. This is no mere supposition, for such was the state of things in those times, and such were the practice and influence of the Roman consuls with the Senate, who had power to dethrone kings, and transfer crowns at their pleasure, that unless their chiefs were liberally supplied with money by their dependent rulers, their crowns were in danger. One historian says, "The chiefs of the Roman Senate sold their influence at an enormous rate;" and the same information may be gathered from the various statements of Josephus. The sagacious newly-made king, being aware of this practice, seized every opportunity of securing to himself the approbation of the Roman consuls, which may be regarded as a proof of his political forecast. The following quotation will show the opinion of an able historian on this subject,—"To the Roman general, Sosius, Herod was indebted for the capture of Jerusalem; but the ravage committed by the troops had reduced the country to the condition of a desert; therefore, to men less politic than Herod, a fair

excuse would have offered itself for omitting to testify to Antony his gratitude; but he measured the propriety of his conduct more by what he was aware of Antony's expectations, than by his own apparent inability to discharge the debt of obligation; therefore he stripped the palace of every ornament, he forced contributions from the wealthy, and even availed himself of the plunder of the dead, and having converted all into money, he sent the produce to Antony at Antioch." We may add, with a request to make away with the captain prince, who was at this period alive; but the rich present of Herod, together with his known wish, was sufficient to secure the death of his victim, and the confirmation of Herod's kingly power.

The next business of Herod was to fill the pontifical chair, for an high priest was essential to his establishment as King of the Jews. So long as the seat remained empty the Hebrews could not settle down to any government,—it seemed essential to their national existence. And Herod being an Idumean, and only a proselyte of the Jewish religion, could not take upon himself this office as the Maccabean princes had done. Hyrcanus, whom the King of Parthia had released from captivity, would have suited Herod very well for this purpose, and would also have satisfied the Jews, but he was incapacitated for that office by being mutilated of his ears.

This fallen prince, after hearing of Herod's success, committed himself without reserve to his protection, no doubt thinking as Herod had married his granddaughter he should be safe and comfortable in his

family. He therefore left Babylon, where he was residing among the Jews, and by whom he was highly honoured as priest and king, though deposed from both these offices. But feeling wishful to settle in his native place and amongst the members of his own family, he came to Jerusalem. Herod received him very graciously, and treated him respectfully; admitted him to his councils, called him father, and gave him the chief place in the judicial assemblies. But, Josephus says, "All this show of friendship was merely hypocrisy." And when we consider the *merely supposed offence* which caused Herod afterwards to put him to death, this opinion of the Jewish historian seems correct. However this might be, whether Herod was sincere or otherwise in his professions of friendship towards Hyrcanus, he could not for the reason above-mentioned make him high priest, he had therefore to look out for another person to sustain that important office.

The hereditary right of the high priesthood, according to the law of Moses, belonged at this time to Herod's brother-in-law, Aristobulus, the son of Alexandra, the youth for whom Herod professedly went to Rome to secure the crown, as before noticed. But Herod, it is believed, felt afraid of conferring this honour on him, lest his engaging appearance and charming manners should captivate the affections of the people, and they should prefer him to rule over them as king, as having a greater right to the throne than Herod: this might have been the case. Herod, therefore, to avoid this, sent to Babylon for a man named Ananelus,

who was a descendant from an inferior family, of the tribe of Levi, and made him high priest. This gave great offence to Alexandra, and of course to Mariamne also, and they both urged him to depose Ananelus, and appoint Aristobulus in his place; but he continued to hesitate. Alexandra therefore wrote to Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, on this matter, requesting her to use her influence with Antony, to call Herod to account for his conduct. Some of our readers will perhaps not be able to understand the last sentence without a little explanation. Cleopatra was a most infamous and detestable woman. She had at this time become the paramour of Mark Antony, having ensnared him, as she did Cæsar, when he went into Egypt to adjudicate on the claims of the crown. This woman seemed to have an unbounded influence over Antony in all matters, and he being in higher authority than Herod, Alexandra tried to engage the queen's influence; also Delliis, a particular favourite of Antony's, was engaged to use his influence in the same direction. What a fearful thing to contemplate, that the appointment of the high priest of God's ancient people should be in the hands of three such characters as Antony, Cleopatra, and Herod! perhaps three of the worst individuals then existing upon the face of the whole earth. Herod deemed it expedient to yield to the wishes of the two ladies, his wife and her mother; it was also gratifying to the generality of the people, and moreover obviated the difficulty and unpleasantness of accounting to the Roman consul for his conduct. So Aristobulus, much against the mind of Herod, was made high priest, and Ananelus was deposed.

As Alexandra had been successful in accomplishing her design in this matter, she began to reason on the claims of her son in reference to the crown, and she arrived at the conclusion that he had as good a claim to the kingdom as he had to the priesthood, and consequently he had a right to both, and ought not to be deprived of either. On his mother's side he was grandson to Hyrcanus, by which line he had an hereditary right to the priesthood, and by his father's side he was the grandson of Aristobulus, and therefore had a right to both the civil and ecclesiastical dignities, as king and pontiff, and his mother having succeeded in obtaining for him the latter, she engaged the same agency in order to obtain for him the former. But in this case it was necessary that her correspondence with Cleopatra should be carried on secretly, for Herod was not the man to be quietly dethroned. And as he was ever alive to his own interest, and a man of deep design and penetrating intellect, it was no easy matter to deceive him. His spies were everywhere, and nothing could pass from his court unobserved. Prideaux says, "Herod guessed at the purport of Alexandra's correspondence, and therefore confined her in the palace." But we should rather think by some means he knew the nature of the correspondence, and therefore made her a palace prisoner until her intrigue should, by some means, be further developed, so that he could take action thereon. Caution, in this case, was particularly necessary on his part, lest he should incur the displeasure of Antony, who had influence to bring about

his deposition. And as Cleopatra possessed such influence over Antony, and was actually engaged against Herod, it required all his skill and sagacity to manage the business so as not to bring about his own ruin.

Alexandra formed a plot for her and her son to escape into Egypt to Cleopatra, who had invited them to pay her a visit. The plan was for them to be carried away in coffins to the next seaport, where a ship was waiting to receive them. Taking into consideration the circumstances in which Alexandra was placed, this plan was never likely to succeed, for every step she took was narrowly watched, and therefore it was impossible for her to escape the palace unobserved. Herod, with his numerous spies on the alert, was almost certain to prevent the plot from being carried out. The probability is that Herod, by some means, knew all about the plot, but allowed them to get off in this clandestine way that he might thereby better accomplish his own pre-arranged plans. Having allowed the sham corpses to be taken on board, he caused them to be seized and brought back, but through fear of Cleopatra and Antony he did not inflict any punishment on them; he therefore professed to pardon them, but in his mind he put the signet of death upon them both, and determined to rid them out of existence at the first opportunity. The young prince was the first who fell a victim to his vengeance. Herod knew that Aristobulus was the rightful heir to the crown which the Roman Senate had placed on his own head, he had therefore reason to fear that so long as Aristobulus was alive there was danger of his being

promoted to the throne; especially so as Cleopatra, the artful Queen of Egypt, who had gained such influence over Antony, had so warmly embraced the interest of the young prince. And what would have a tendency to strengthen Herod's apprehensions was, Aristobulus had the affections of the people, which was publicly manifested the first time he officiated as pontiff on a public occasion. At the Feast of Tabernacles this youthful pontiff discharged his duties so gracefully, and appeared in such splendour and beauty that he captivated the affections of the whole assembly, and they made no secret of their gratification and delight, but openly expressed their satisfaction. This was more than the jealous usurper could endure, he therefore resolved on his immediate death, but not by violence, lest it should create a civil war, which at that time he particularly dreaded. He contrived to accomplish his design in such a way as gave his death the appearance of an unfortunate accident, in which it would be a difficult matter to prove that he was in any way implicated in the affair, even if he were suspected. Herod and Aristobulus went in company to Jericho to partake of an entertainment provided for them and other members of the royal family. After dinner the young men went to bathe and amuse themselves in the ornamental waters which adorned the palace gardens, in which sport Herod persuaded Aristobulus to join, when he was drowned by the hired myrmidons of Herod under the pretence of play. When the consequence was known it spread consternation through the palace, and the hypocritical king,

who was the cause of his death, professed to be so overwhelmed with grief that he shed tears, and as a further blind he provided for him, at his own expense, a most magnificent funeral, and acted the part of a sincere mourner, weeping and lamenting as he followed the deceased to his final resting place. He most likely thought this solemn mockery would soothe the anger of the bereaved mother, and annihilate any suspicion which might arise respecting his being, in any way, accessory to the tragical event. But his hypocrisy was as apparent as his crime. None believed his sorrow to be genuine, and Alexandra was inconsolable, and determined if possible to be avenged on the tyrant. She communicated the facts of the transaction to Cleopatra, who influenced Antony to summons Herod to answer for his conduct in this affair. Herod promptly obeyed the mandate, but was careful to take with him his old friend and special pleader, who had previously brought him through many difficulties—*a large sum of money*. This soothed down the pretended indignation of the perfidious consul, and he acquitted the royal defendant of the allegations preferred against him by Alexandra through the Queen of Egypt; and in order to satisfy Cleopatra, who was anxious to have Herod put to death that she might have Judea added to her kingdom, he gave her Cœlo-Syria instead of Judea, so the matter dropped, perhaps quite as well for Alexandra as if Herod had been put to death and Judea transferred to Egypt.

After this mock trial Herod returned in triumph to Jerusalem, but fresh family troubles awaited him, occa-

sioned by his own hateful selfishness, jealousy, and despotic cruelty. Before leaving home to appear before Antony, he commanded his uncle Joseph, whom he left governor of his family during his absence, that in case he was put to death he must immediately murder Mariamne, his best beloved wife, under the pretence that he loved her so much that he could not bear the idea of anyone else enjoying her, especially Antony. Joseph incautiously divulged this murderous secret to Mariamne as a proof of Herod's extreme love for her, but neither the queen nor her mother regarded this plot as a proof of his extraordinary affection; and Mariamne thought it high time to begin to devise plans for her personal safety, in case her *very affectionate* husband should be cut off, and she would be subjected to the same unhappy fate. Herod returned home, as we have stated, much gratified to think that money had been so successful as to prove him perfectly innocent of a crime of which he well knew he was guilty. But the triumphing of the wicked is but for a moment. He returned home, not to enjoy its sweets, but to drink the bitters of gall and wormwood, and to have his soul pierced through with many sorrows.

Salome, the sister of Herod, having received some insult from Mariamne, out of revenge insinuated to Herod that Joseph, who was her husband, had formed criminal acquaintance with the queen during his absence. But this being an untruthful and malicious accusation, might have passed over without any serious consequences, had not Mariamne subsequently re-

sented his professed affection towards her, in upbraiding him with the orders he gave to Joseph to have her put to death in case he never returned, which she could not under any consideration regard as a proof of his love for her. This caused Herod to believe what his sister had stated concerning the illicit intercourse existing between Mariamne and Joseph, and he immediately gave orders for the execution of Joseph, without hearing his defence; inasmuch as he considered the betrayal of his secret a sufficient proof of his criminality. With regard to Mariamne, he paused, and after calm reflection spared her life. Having heard the statement of his falsely accused wife, he saw no just reason to suspect her fidelity, but turned upon her mother, whom he never forgave for accusing him to Antony, put her in chains, and shut her up in prison, under the ostensible pretext that she was the cause of his family disturbance, when at the same time he must have known it originated with himself.

Shortly after this serious occurrence another very unpleasant affair turned up, which caused Herod much anxiety and doubt as to the safety of his elevated position.

Cleopatra, the Queen of Egypt, who had become the wife or paramour of Antony, on her return from the Euphrates, where she had accompanied her deluded dupe, called at Jerusalem to visit Herod, who, notwithstanding his secret hatred towards her, entertained her in a manner becoming her rank and station in life. This he did more from the dread he had of her influence than from any feeling of respect. It is stated, that while she

sojourned in his palace, "she pretended to be in love with him, and attempted, by her conversation, to draw him into lewdness with her, through which he was provoked to a resolution to put her to death; but being otherwise advised by his council and friends, he went on to pay her every compliment and respect as long as she stayed with him, and on her departure waited upon her in person, as far as the borders of her kingdom. But still fearing her malice and influence with Antony, he fortified Masada, the strongest castle in Judea, and furnished it with arms for 10,000 men, that he might have a place of refuge for his security in time of need." This statement of Herod's respecting the lewd behaviour of Cleopatra is related in substance by Josephus, and several other historians, without any comment, as though it were strictly correct, but we cannot but think there is some doubt as to its veracity.

That Herod dreaded the influence of the Egyptian queen cannot be doubted, and from her general character and previous conduct towards him he had just reason for entertaining such fears, and no doubt he secretly wished her out of existence. And being a very sagacious, calculating man, by this time it is likely he had predicted in his own mind the downfall of Antony if he continued under the influence of this artful, cruel, and ambitious woman; and thought if such a change should take place he might in all probability be deprived of his own crown by Augustus, who was disgusted with Antony's conduct. He might therefore thus accuse Cleopatra before his council, that he might be

provided with a plausible reason for taking away her life, and thereby paving his way to gain the favour of Augustus. He well knew that the triumviri of Rome utterly detested Cleopatra, on account of Antony's deposing his lawful wife, the sister of Augustus, and taking up with this lewd and cruel Queen of Egypt, who professed to have been married to Cæsar. And it is a noteworthy fact that the last request which Herod made of Antony was the murder of Cleopatra, and the appropriation of her dominion and treasures for his own purpose, as the last and only method of re-establishing himself after his final defeat by Augustus. On the refusal of Antony's compliance with this advice, Herod immediately espoused the interest of Augustus, and repaired to have an audience with him at Rhodes, as we shall have occasion shortly to notice. All things considered, it is a difficult matter to judge correctly on a case like this. Cleopatra was certainly a very lewd and vile woman, and might for some purpose or design be guilty of attempting to ensnare Herod; and on the other hand, Herod was a cruel, plotting, and deep designing man, who did not hesitate much in taking away the life of any person, either friend or foe, either guilty or innocent, in order to secure his own interest, and promote his own security and aggrandisement; therefore how it really was between these two profligate individuals we cannot safely say. Both parties might be guilty, while it is certain both parties could not be innocent. To use a common-place aphorism, "they were well met," and when they parted, Herod was so much afraid of Cleo-

patra's reporting *something* which would offend Antony, that he prepared the strongest fortress in Judea as a refuge for a time of need.

It is only just and right to say that under the government of Herod Judea recovered from the effects of the civil war, occasioned by Antigonus and his adherents, so that he was able to render considerable assistance to Antony, the eastern triumvir, whose interest he had warmly embraced, and whom he continued to support till the fatal battle of Actium, when the deluded and unfortunate Antony was finally defeated by the army of Augustus. In fact, Herod knew that it would have been immediate ruin to him if he had betrayed the remotest intention of falling away from Antony, whose armies being near, supported by the forces of the Egyptian queen, could have swept the Idumean from his throne. Therefore Herod, as a matter of policy, whatever might be his feeling of esteem for Antony, felt himself bound to support him till he had fallen to rise no more. At the same time he had to avoid, as far as possible, any direct hostility towards Augustus (then called Octavius), in case he defeated Antony and became the sole master of the Roman empire. At this critical period Herod gave full proof of his sagacity, and the skilful prudence of an able politician. The reader must bear in mind that the interests of Antony and Cleopatra at this time were in reality one, therefore Herod dexterously selected a course of procedure which more particularly bore upon the interest of the Queen, and which would not have the appearance of opposing Augustus. Cleopatra at this

time was involved in a war with Malchus, the Arabian king. Herod so negotiated matters with Antony and his mistress, as to relieve the whole Egyptian force from the Arabian war, so that they might go to his assistance in the approaching contest which was about to take place in the Adriatic waters. Herod therefore marched with a powerful army into Arabia, but was repulsed with terrible slaughter. One reason of this defeat was, the soldiers of Herod went very reluctantly into battle, because with Malchus the Jews had no ground for quarrel, neither had they anything to gain, and to shed their blood merely in support of a heathen queen whom they really disliked, however it might suit the policy of Herod, was too humiliating for the sons of Abraham, and the worshippers of Jehovah. His army therefore having nothing of real interest to inspire them, were easily beaten, and their commander was obliged to retreat, and circumstances so turned up that they were not called upon a second time to engage in this war. The next time Herod took his army into Arabia, it was to avenge the death of the Jewish Ambassadors, who had been put to death by the provoked Arabs while the Jewish nation was suffering under a most distressing catastrophe, which perhaps would make them feel the stroke more keenly.

In the year 32 B.C. an earthquake took place on the shores of the Mediterranean, which convulsed the south of Palestine ; many cities were totally overthrown, and 30,000 people perished. This dreadful calamity was felt throughout the whole extent of Judea. The Arabs

regarding the last Jewish war as unprovoked, looked upon this general panic as a favourable opportunity to give a signal manifestation of their resentment, and of punishing the Jewish army, that they had so readily beaten on the former occasion, not taking into consideration the difference with regard to the cause of the two actions. Whatever grievances exist among nations, ambassadors, who are helpless in the midst of foreigners, have always, amongst civilized people, been held inviolable, but the Arabs on this occasion violated this general law of nations; and when the intelligence reached Jerusalem the whole nation was aroused, and thousands of soldiers volunteered to take part in forming an expedition to avenge the blood of their national representatives. This project just suited the tactics of Herod, for it both led to the accomplishment of his purpose, and raised him to popular favour among the Jews. We can scarcely help thinking that Herod had some hand in the tragedy committed by the Arabs. However this might be, he again went out with his infuriated army, defeated the Arabs in a decisive battle, and when he returned he obtained the general applause of his subjects, who felt satisfied with the punishment he had inflicted upon a people who had acted such a barbarous and dishonourable part as to slay their ambassadors. While Herod was engaged in assisting Antony, *indirectly*, against Augustus, a naval engagement was contested between these two rivals, in the Ambracian gulf, near Actium, in which Antony was totally defeated; after which he retreated to Alexandria,

where he threw himself upon his sword and miserably perished by his own hand.

Cleopatra, having nothing in the future to anticipate but degradation and misery, caused a venomous viper to be applied to her breast, the bite of which was fatal, and with her death terminated the race of the Ptolemies; a dynasty which had governed in Egypt for three hundred years, from the death of Alexander the Great to the conquest of Augustus over the eastern triumvirate, 31 years before Christ.

The final fall and death of Antony, which put Augustus in possession of the supreme authority of the eastern part of the Roman empire, placed Herod in very jeopardous circumstances, so that his best friends almost despaired of his safety. The fact of his having supported the rival of Augustus was too well-known to be either denied or disguised, and his ability to maintain an independent position against the forces of Augustus was impossible; his enemies therefore rejoiced at the prospect of his downfall and final ruin. The only chance he seemed to have (and it appeared a very unlikely one) was, if possible, to make a friendship with Augustus, the monarch whom he had been so dexterously opposing. Herod, at this critical period, when his fortune for life trembled in the balance, gave a striking manifestation of that ability and of those qualities of mind for which he was so remarkably distinguished—measured sagacity, accompanied with shrewdness and skilfulness in carrying his political schemes into execution. He neither sat down in despair, nor rashly took

up arms against the man whom he knew he was not able to successfully resist. He resolved on a personal interview with Augustus, and accordingly set off to Rhodes, where he met with him; and finding himself in the presence of this illustrious personage he put on a bold and frank exterior, accompanied with humble submission, for he laid aside his diadem, and ventured to plead his own cause. A man of ordinary capabilities would, in all probability, have broken down under the pressure of an enterprise so hazardous, but Herod, with an air of peculiar calmness and intrepidity, sustained himself while he delivered his masterly address. The Jewish historian records the speech which Herod made on this memorable occasion at full length, of which the following is a digest. Being allowed to state his case, he made no apology for having taken up arms against Augustus, neither did he make any pretensions to repentance for what he had done, nor did he in any way palliate his conduct. He ventured on trying another method, which bore the aspect of frankness, honesty, and fidelity. He addressed Augustus in the tones of a man conscious of having displayed towards his friend a fidelity, which, in the judgment of all good men, was in the highest degree worthy of approbation and praise. He said, "If attachment to Antony be a crime, I plead guilty; but if, having thus seen how steady and faithful I am in my friendship you determine to bind me to your fortunes by gratitude, depend on the same firmness and fidelity." He was also mindful to state that he had advised Antony to put Cleopatra to death, know-

ing this would please Augustus, whose noble sister had been deposed to make way for this infamous woman, and who had borne a son whom she intimated was Cæsar's heir. He further added that if Antony had adopted his counsel it might have led to a reconciliation between him and Augustus, and in conclusion he stated that as he had been true and faithful to Antony, having now espoused the cause of Augustus, he should be equally true and faithful to him. In addition to his apparent open and generous speech he made Augustus a valuable present, and also those who were about his person, by which he gained the favour of all, and returned to Jerusalem safe, in the security of his kingdom, which was shortly afterwards confirmed by a decree of the Roman Senate.

Herod was now more firmly seated on his throne than he had been heretofore, and his chief object was to keep in favour with Augustus, whose growing influence soon raised him to supreme power in the Senate. Soon after Herod's regal confirmation, Augustus had occasion to pass through Judea on his way to Egypt, on which occasion Herod was mindful not only to please him with the most splendid entertainment, but also to present him with an immensely rich present of 800 talents, and other valuable articles, which led some to suspect that he must have exhausted the wealth of his kingdom, to have thus honoured and enriched his imperial guest. The end which Herod had in view was answered thereby. He assured Augustus of his fidelity, and made the impression on his mind which he desired, viz., that he

was wealthy and loyal to him as the sovereign of the world.

Herod had now reached a very exalted position. All pretenders to the crown of Judea were either subjugated or destroyed. The last male heir of the Asmoneans was cut off, rebellion had been successfully subdued, and civil war brought to an end. The supreme governors of the civilized world had expressed to him their friendship and affection, and the chief of those governors had honoured him with a friendly visit, and given him assurance of future protection and support if needed. Beside all this, other territories were legally added to his dominion. "But whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." And Herod, before leaving Jerusalem to meet Augustus at Rhodes, had, as on the former occasion when he was summoned to the court of Antony, been sowing the seeds of unrighteousness, which, during his absence, took deep root, brought forth a harvest of mischief, filled his crown with thorns, and laid a foundation for years of bitter anguish.

Herod on going to meet Augustus committed the government of his house to his brother, Pheroras, but he placed Mariamne and her mother in the fortress of Alexandron, under the care of Soemus, with the secret injunction, that in case he was put to death his wife should share the same fate, and also Alexandra, his mother-in-law, thus to make an end of the Maccabean family. This is supposed to have been his object. If the supposition be well founded, we cannot but feel surprised that a man of Herod's intelligence should

take this view of the subject. It is lamentable to find that while he displayed such skill and sagacity in the plans and execution of his political affairs, he manifested such a mixture of folly and cruelty in reference to his domestic concerns. It might have occurred to his mind that if Augustus had either taken away his life or dethroned and imprisoned him, on account of his adherence to Antony, he would never have raised one of his sons to occupy his place, neither would it have been possible for any of his family to have claimed and retained the crown; and therefore his idea of having the lives of Alexandra and Mariamne taken away lest through their influence the Maccabean family should again be raised to the throne, to the exclusion of his own family, was extreme folly, and indicated a disordered state of mind. The crown would have been, as it really was then, at the disposal of Augustus.

Just at the time when Herod was intoxicated with his success and the glorious prospects which awaited him, his joy was suddenly turned into sorrow. In the case just mentioned he had mixed for himself a bitter cup, which not only sobered him, but filled him with intolerable mortification and unutterable misery, which were of long continuance. What avails the friendship of Augustus, the tranquillity of his kingdom, and the stability of his throne, if his palace and home be overwhelmed with domestic calamities, and the wife of his bosom hates and abhors him? This was really the case with Herod after his return from Rhodes. His last orders when leaving Jerusalem were made known to

the queen, and she regarded them as ferocious and cruel, and therefore she despised him in the very depths of her soul. She literally hated him, and would never more be reconciled to him; and being a woman of high spirit and undaunted courage she made no secret of her feelings, though she knew it might be the cause of her death. Herod was sorely troubled at her conduct, for though he acted so foolishly, it is generally believed that he loved her most dearly. But notwithstanding all he could do the queen continued to reject his caresses with contempt, and accused him of the murder of her near and dear relatives, and continually upbraided him with her own wrongs, so that he had no peace.

Salome, who disliked Mariamne, arranged a plot to make Herod believe that she had engaged a servant to bring him poison; this again added to his misery. At length the injured queen told him she was made acquainted with his barbarous arrangement. He immediately suspected who had divulged the secret, and accused him of criminal connection with Mariamne. Soemus was immediately put to death, and the queen brought to trial, before a bench of packed judges, by whom she was condemned, and finally executed. And, strange to say, her own mother, Alexandra, in order to obtain the favour of Herod, loaded her unhappy daughter with insulting reproaches, and even offered her personal violence as she went to the place of execution. But Mariamne bore up under all with unflinching fortitude, without changing colour upon the approach of death. She died as she lived—"great, firm, and fearless to the

last; thus ended the life of this virtuous and excellent princess. In the beauty and other charms and graces of her person she excelled all the women of the time, and would have been a lady without exception, could she have carried it with some better temper and complaisance toward her husband." But we must remember her grievous insults from Salome, the martyrdom of her dearest relations, the orders given in reference to her own death by her husband who had usurped the crown which legally belonged to her family, and then we shall not wonder at her irritation, and her lack of affection and complaisance towards Herod.

After Herod had quenched his burning rage in the blood of his excellent and virtuous wife, he felt all the miseries of a wounded conscience increased by the remembrance of conjugal affection, which seemed to return again and take possession of his soul. Though dead she still lived in his heart, and her form was constantly before his eyes. At length he became mentally distracted, and would often call for Mariamne, and order his servants to bring her to him. His health and strength soon failed him, and he sank under a painful disease which threatened his dissolution. In this miserable condition he resided at Samaria, and it was generally thought that he would never recover. Many no doubt would rejoice at his downfall, for his cruelty and tyranny caused him to be both dreaded and hated.

While Herod lay thus sick, and frequently delirious, Alexandra concluded his restoration was impossible, and laid a plot for seizing the government. She went so

far as to make proposals to the governors of the two forts in Jerusalem to be delivered into her hands. These two fortresses commanded the temple and the city, and consequently to hold these with a strong garrison was to be master of the city, and with it, to a great extent, the whole of Judea. Her design was, in case of Herod's death, or total incapacity to govern, to seize the sovereignty of the kingdom for herself and grandsons, the children of the murdered queen, and thus cut off, as far as possible, the Idumean race, by preserving in the government and in the priesthood, on the mother's side, the Maccabean blood. The officers of Herod were true to their king, and informed him of Alexandra's proposals, who immediately, agreeably with his natural disposition, gave orders for her to be put to death. We can scarcely feel sorry for this hypocritical lady, when we consider the infamous conduct she manifested towards her noble daughter, when Herod ordered her execution. Her object in acting this unnatural and cruel part was to secure the favour of the overbearing tyrant, but she was his next victim, and the last of royal blood of the Maccabean family; for the death of Hyrcanus, the queen's grandfather, was brought about by Herod, who ordered his execution. Prideaux says, "He trumped up a sham plot against the old prince, and ex-high priest Hyrcanus, to make it appear that he had been holding illegal correspondence with Malchus, king of Arabia, on which pretence he had him executed." If this be correct, Herod was verily guilty of murdering a man who had been his greatest friend in early life, and through

whom he had been raised to his princely position. The father of Herod made a tool of Hyrcanus to raise his family to power and authority. (Josephus says, "Both Antipater and Herod came to their greatness by reason of his mildness, and at last he met with such an end from them as was not agreeable either to justice or piety." Antiq. bk. xv. c. vii. s. 4.) For Herod to put him to death in his old age, under this false pretence, was certainly an act of consummate cruelty, but in perfect harmony with his general conduct.





CHAPTER XXVI.

Herod the Great—Events of his Life.



Herod recovers from his malady and enfeebled state of mind—His open apostacy from the Jewish religion—A conspiracy formed against Herod's life—Drought and famine in the land of Judea—Herod's generous conduct during the famine—He gains favour thereby—Peace and great prosperity in Judea—Herod's marriage with Mariamne, the daughter of Simon—Simon made high priest, and Jesus, the son of Phalet, deposed—Herod builds a new palace—His extravagant expenditure in honour of Augustus—Herod supports heathenism—He proposes to rebuild the temple and repair the fortifications of the city—Question considered in relation to the second temple, and that built by Herod—Prophecy respecting Christ coming to the second temple—Various opinions of learned men on this subject considered.



HEROD, after a period of severe suffering both in body and mind, became so far restored that he was able again to attend to the duties involved in his government and public administration. But when he came from his retired seat of misery, there were discovered in his countenance visible traces of the moral tempest which had swept through the region of his guilty soul while in solitude. But notwithstanding

the severe chastisement which he had so keenly felt, his haughty spirit was not in the least humbled. His conduct showed him to be as stern and tyrannical as he was before he went into retirement. His conduct in introducing foreign customs, which in the opinion of the Jews were profanely wicked, provoked a number of them to conspire against him, and to form a determination to take away his life. They considered that his open apostasy from the Jewish religion, while he sustained the office of their supreme governor, was so contrary to their divinely established institutions, and so glaringly demonstrated, as to justify their conduct in adopting such a measure. This course of reasoning was certainly erroneous. A number of conspirators have no authority, either human or divine, to constitute themselves judges and administrators of justice under any consideration whatever; "their zeal therefore was not according to knowledge." Ten of these heroic conspirators, with concealed daggers, entered the theatre where they expected to meet with Herod, with an intention to carry their design into execution. A man who was acquainted with the plot, one of Herod's spies, divulged the sanguinary secret, on which the conspirators were immediately seized and put to death. This act so enraged the people that they without hesitation assassinated the spy, and threw his dead and mangled body to the dogs. The infuriated king then turned his thought on revenge, and put to the rack a number of women whom he supposed were able to inform him who committed this awful tragedy. The accused persons,

with their innocent children, were all hurriedly executed, on which account the people generally became so excited that they made no secret of their indignation, and gave alarming indications of open rebellion. Herod was so alarmed that he began to adopt measures for his personal safety. He lost no time in fortifying and garrisoning some of his principal fortresses, to which he might flee and find refuge in time of danger. At this time, when the nation seemed just on the point of a civil eruption, a circumstance occurred which afforded Herod an opportunity of manifesting his clemency and generosity, and as a matter of policy he endeavoured to convince the people of his humane and generous principles and disposition. "In this year," says Josephus, "which was the thirteenth year of the reign of Herod, very great calamities came upon the country. In the first place there were perpetual drought, and for that reason the ground was barren, and after this barrenness of soil that change of food, which the want of corn occasioned, produced distempers in the bodies of men, and pestilential diseases prevailed, one misery followed upon the back of another, and these circumstances, that they were destitute both of methods of cure and food, made the pestilential distemper more lasting." We may also add that this calamity extended not only throughout Judea, but also throughout Syria and the surrounding provinces.

During this distressing period Herod greatly exerted himself to supply the people with food to sustain them alive; and after having exhausted his treasures, "he

cut off the rich furniture that was in his palace, both of silver and gold, insomuch that he did not spare the finest vessels he had, and those that were made with the most elaborate skill of the artificers, but sent the money to Pretonius, governor of Egypt, to be exchanged for corn. The care and generosity of Herod, during this season of affliction, manifested towards his people had such an influence on them as to allay that old hatred which his violation of some of their customs during his reign had procured among all the nation." His liberality seemed to be regarded as a compensation for all the evil he had done. And these acts of charity and generosity not only gained the favour of the Jews, but also made his name famous among all the surrounding nations, who regarded him as a wise and generous prince.

Herod had now both peace and prosperity throughout his kingdom. He had moreover the favour and protection of Augustus, who had attained to absolute power to do all things in the government of the empire, according to his arbitrary will and pleasure, and was regarded by the Romans as a being of superhuman authority; and it is evident that Herod used every means to perpetuate his friendship with this distinguished personage, who was then regarded as the monarch of the world. He built a magnificent palace on Mount Zion, which was the highest part of the holy city. This palace, we are informed, was of such large dimensions that it was equal in magnitude to the temple itself, and was called Cæsarcum, in honour of Augustus Cæsar, and a distinct apartment thereof,

Agrippeum, in honour of Agrippa, who was a particular favourite with Augustus. He also furnished Augustus with five hundred men of his guards to assist in an expedition against the Arabs.

In the year 23 B.C. Herod was married to a beautiful young lady, of the same name as that of his second wife, Mariamne (the Asmonean). She was the daughter of Simon, an ordinary priest who resided in Jerusalem. But in order to make her a more suitable match in rank and station for himself, he first made her father high priest, by removing Jesus, the son of Phabis, from that office. Josephus, speaking of Herod's conduct in relation to these affairs, says, "He governed his inclinations after the most prudent manner, by augmenting the dignity of the family and making them more honourable; so he immediately deprived Jesus, the son of Phabis, of the high priesthood, and conferred the dignity on Simon, and so joined in affinity with him by marrying his daughter." This might be very well for Simon, and more agreeable with the dignity of Herod than marrying the daughter of a common priest; but what became of the son of Phabis, the former, and it may be supposed the rightful, high priest? What right had Herod to depose him? What compensation did the tyrannical despot make him? This is nowhere stated. Merely to gratify his own inclinations and pride he unceremoniously removed from office the highest ecclesiastical functionary in the divinely established hierarchy. It might be under some other pretext, but his real object was manifest. It may be said the appointment of the

pontiff was with the king; admitting this was the case, it was certainly morally and religiously wrong thus to tamper with "the Lord's anointed," and make the ecclesiastical office subservient and a mere instrumentality in the support of worldly dignity and the accomplishment of secular objects; there is too much of this in our times in connection with our state church establishment. And with Herod this was but a small thing, as he had more regard for the gratification of his own inclinations than either for justice towards his fellow-men or the honour of God and the rights of the church. Simon being elevated to the pontifical chair, and the king having taken his daughter to wife, he built a new palace. This he erected about seven miles from Jerusalem. It was a stately and most magnificent edifice, situated on the top of a hill, from which there was a fine prospect of the surrounding country. From the description given of it by the Jewish historian, where he illustrates the site by one of his singular comparisons, we infer that from the palace, which stood on the summit of the hill, the ground declined all round with an equal and uniform descent, giving the elevation a hemispherical appearance; and at the base were built numerous dwelling-houses, amounting in size to a considerable city. This was the place where he gained a signal victory over the Parthians and Antigonian Jews on his retreat to the fortress of Masada, when he was contending for the crown. Herod called this palace Herodium, in memory of this conquest.

The labour and expense of building this citadel and

the surrounding edifices must have been immense. How the king raised money to accomplish his ambitious designs, so soon after the national distress, and the exhaustion of his own private resources, as above mentioned, cannot be accounted for, only on the supposition of his levying heavy taxation on his subjects, which amounted to cruel oppression. His generosity was of short duration, but his oppression of long continuance, for no expense was spared to flatter and please himself and confer honour on his imperial patron, Augustus. When he entered upon, and accomplished that grand project, of converting the tower of Strato into a city and seaport, with a professed design of increasing the commercial prosperity of his kingdom, he manifestly kept in view this object of flattering Cæsar, and thereby raising himself in the estimation of that monarch. He accordingly inscribed the name of Cæsar and those of his friends in every place where they could be gracefully affixed. For instance, the most splendid temple, which he erected, was dedicated to Augustus Cæsar, the most conspicuous tower in the city was called Drusium, in honour of Drusus, the son-in-law of Augustus; a colossal statue of Augustus, like that of Olympian Jove, was also erected, and near it another as large as that of Argiva Juno, being a female figure, representing the city of Rome.

Twelve years were occupied, and millions of money spent in completing these stupendous works. The building of the city, the formation of its harbours, and the defence of the same by breakwaters, walls, and towers

were all praiseworthy undertakings, being necessary for the accommodation and protection of merchant ships and commerce; but the erection of heathen temples and costly monuments to the praise and honour of pagan princes, in the kingdom of Judea, were acts unworthy of a Jewish monarch, and insulting to the God of Israel. And it was not at Cæsarea and Sebaste only that he lavished the nation's money in honour of the Roman emperor and paganism, but also in Jericho and Jerusalem the name of Cæsar and Agrippa were conspicuously emblazoned on costly edifices erected to the honour of these heathen princes. Josephus says, "There was not a single place in the whole country, worthy of such a distinction, where the name of Cæsar was not conspicuous;" from which it is evident, that the whole line of policy which Herod pursued while sovereign of Judea, was that of pleasing Augustus. He therefore renounced, as far as possible, every Jewish prejudice, and adopted every custom that he could to honour his protector. He wished to appear in the estimation of foreign nations simply as the king of Judea, rather than a Jewish king. Hence, he largely contributed to the support of heathen temples, and the restoration of the Olympic games, as a practical proof that he was not "a narrow-minded Jew," but a patron of the opinions and customs adopted by other civilized nations. In fact, he was guided and governed by considerations of political interest, rather than by the dictates of religion, or any fixed rules of moral conduct; he must therefore, on these political principles, prevent

as far as possible rebellion and civil war rising amongst his own people, which led to the re-building of the temple. Herod, it seems, was led to undertake this great work (of re-building the temple), not so much from the sincere love he had for the Jewish religion, as from a consideration of such a measure giving satisfaction to the Jews, and thereby securing the peace of the nation. This we think may very readily be gathered from the writing of the Jewish historian.

At this time Herod's prosperity as a temporal monarch was at his height, which had been reached by his compliance with heathen customs and his courtesy towards the Roman emperor and his senators. But he had gone too far in this direction for his Jewish subjects. They began to rise in indignation at his conduct, and give evident indications, by their murmurs and prevailing dissatisfaction, that they should not long submit to have their religion superseded by the introduction of heathenism. These feelings Herod strove to suppress by a most rigid and vexatious system of policy, in prohibiting people from associating or even walking or talking together; instituting spies and filling the nation with detective agents, who strictly watched every expression, and reported the slightest manifestation of hostility. He even condescended to disguise himself, and thereby became a private spy and detective. He also required the people to make oath of their fidelity to his person, and on their refusing compliance, he punished them with imprisonment and other penal inflictions. Many, through fear, as might be expected, complied with his

requirements, while others, especially among the Pharisees and Essenes, boldly refused compliance, on which Herod, having tested the feelings of the nation, and "out of respect to Pollio and Menahem, the respective leaders of the sects," and finding it impossible to subdue the national religious feeling, which rose up like a mountain wave against his impious introduction of heathen customs, "he *reluctantly* yielded to their prejudices, and *professed*, with respect and goodwill to their religion, to undertake to rebuild the holy temple, which was then in a dilapidated state, on a most magnificent scale." No wonder at the temple being in a dilapidated state, when we consider the numerous sieges to which it had been exposed, the length of time it had stood, and how it had been neglected during the last half century.

This plan of Herod's was proposed and accompanied with a plausible oration, in which he expressed his designs and the pleasure he felt in such an important undertaking. The idea would no doubt be very pleasing to the Jews generally, but some of them doubted the possibility of its accomplishment, while the more thoughtful among them would secretly call in question the sincerity of Herod's proposals, and think he would never finish the work, that the temple being once pulled down, would never be raised again. But in order to convince them both of his willingness and ability to execute his vast plans, he made preparation for the erection of the new temple before he removed a single stone of the old structure, and from what is recorded on

this subject he must have immediately expended a vast sum of money. For we are informed, "The execution of that part of the former building which strictly constituted the temple, and which comprehended the porch, the holy place, and the holy of holies, occupied a space not more than eighteen months; but the porticoes and other works surrounding the temple were not completed till the lapse of a further space of eight years." From this account of Josephus it appears that Herod did not leave any part of the second temple standing, which had been erected on the return of the Jews from their Babylonish captivity. He asserts that the sacred building "was entirely new, even from the foundation," and both the size and extent greatly exceeded the former building erected under the superintendency of Zerubbabel. Dr. Prideaux receives this account without strictures or critical remarks; and professor Whiston, in one of his notes on the "Antiquities of the Jews," remarks, "the fancy of modern Jews in calling this temple, which was really the third of the temples, the second temple, followed so long by later Christians, seems to be without any solid foundation;" and he regards it as a great mistake, and thinks that the prophecy of Haggai (ii. 6-9) refers to Christ coming to his fourth and last temple, or to that future large and most glorious one described by Ezekiel, "The glory of the latter house probably applies to the Christian church, the real house of God; its glory was most certainly greater than any glory which was ever possessed by that of the Jews." But another learned author of later date says, "It is to be observed

that the work of Herod was not the complete renewal of the sacred building; it was not the erection of a third temple, it was the work of Zerubbabel restored and enlarged, so that there was no falsification of the inspired prediction relative to the superior glory of the second temple in the personal presence and glory of the Messiah." And Kitto, who carefully investigated this subject, says, "Herod did not wholly rebuild the temple, but repaired it generally and extensively, taking down certain parts that were decayed and constructing them again on new foundations, and adding new buildings and walls; completing, strengthening, and adorning the whole on a regular plan. Such alterations and repairs, although very extensive, would not destroy the identity of the building." From the above quotations it will be seen that learned commentators, and acknowledged historians, differ in their opinion as to whether the temple which stood in the time of Christ, and was afterwards destroyed by Titus, is to be regarded as the second or the third temple. And of course this involves another important question as to the meaning of Haggai's prediction relative to "the desire of all nations," and the superior glory of the latter temple.

We shall first consider the prophecy of Haggai, which reads thus, "Who is left among you which saw this house in her first glory? and how do you see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?" These questions plainly indicate that the temple which was then newly erected by Zerubbabel was much inferior to the former temple built by Solomon. But the

prophet predicts in the ninth verse that “the glory of *this* latter house shall be greater than the former,” for in it God will give peace. There are two particulars in this prophecy which claims our distinct attention, first, what are we to understand by the phrase, “*this latter house*,” and secondly, in what respects was this “latter house” greater, or superior, to the first temple, or, in other words, what constituted its greater glory?

1. The “latter house,” which was then the subject under consideration, and the object brought before the people by the prophet. This was certainly the temple newly erected by Zerubbabel, which was, considered as an edifice, inferior to the temple formerly erected by Solomon. But the prophet predicted, “this latter house shall be greater than the former.” Now we think that he referred to the building, to which their attention was at that time directed, and which Christ glorified with his personal presence and teaching. But this we are told, as we have before noticed, “was pulled down by Herod and a new one erected in its place;” but this cannot be clearly demonstrated. The Jewish writers, when speaking of improvements on a large scale, in reference to towns and cities, as though they had been newly built, though they previously existed, and their identity was not annihilated by the alterations and improvements made. This, we think, might be the case in reference to Herod’s rebuilding the temple. And such an opinion gains strength from the fact that we do not read of any alteration in the mode of celebrating the religious services during the progress of

Herod's alterations. We therefore regard it as highly probable that the holy place remained standing, though it might be materially altered and improved with the eighteen months' labour bestowed upon it; this alone was quite sufficient to preserve the identity of the building, for that was really and truly the house, though it occupied but a small part of the site covered by the courts and the buildings of the temple, in which amplified sense the term is generally understood. We may also add that the Jews did not consider the identity of a building destroyed until it had lain for a time in a state of desolation, and its ruins removed or decayed. This was the case in reference to Solomon's temple, for when Nebuchadnezzar overthrew the Hebrew monarchy he made the ruin of the temple and the metropolis complete. Nebuzaradan, the captain of the Babylonish guard, levelled the temple, the palaces, and the fortifications with the dust, and in this ruinous state they continued for seventy years; therefore, when the captives returned and laid the foundations of a new temple it was regarded as the second. But no such occurrences took place between this temple and the one said to be built by Herod. However it might be reconstructed, improved, and enlarged by Herod, it was not in reality a third temple, but continued to be identified as the second, and has been so regarded by many, both Jewish and Christian, writers ever since. If Dr. Whiston and a few other great men differ from this general opinion, we are under no obligation to agree with them, unless they can furnish stronger proof in favour

of their notions than a mere assertion that the popular opinion "has no solid foundation."

2. In what sense did the glory of "this latter house" excel the glory of the former? This Dr. A. Clarke argues could not be, and he therefore concludes that the latter house must refer, not literally to the temple, but to the Church of Christ. Here again we are necessarily, according to the notion we have adopted, brought into collision with the opinion of a learned biblical scholar. Dr. Clarke reasons thus, "It is said 'the glory of the latter house shall be greater than that of the former.' Now this cannot be said, because Jesus Christ made his appearance in that temple, or rather in that built by Herod; for, though we allow that Jesus Christ is equal with God, we do not grant that he is greater. Now, the first temple was the dwelling-place of God; here he manifested his glory between the cherubim, and in it was his constant residence for more than four hundred years." Is this reasoning sound and conclusive? if so we must recall what we have just written; but we really cannot see the force and conclusiveness of the doctor's argument. He seems to think that the Shekinah, or visible manifestation of the divine presence which was displayed above the mercy-seat between the cherubim, was a revelation of the divine glory equal to Christ, God manifest in the flesh, "the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person," and yet he admits that the grand scheme of human redemption, which was the work of Christ, "was most certainly greater and more glorious than any glory which

was ever possessed by that of the Jews." According to this mode of reasoning the work of Christ is more glorious than Christ himself, and greater than God the Father, who constantly resided in the first temple. This we cannot believe. But we can believe that the divine manifestation in the person of Christ, who is eternally one with the Father, of the same mind and essence, in all the fulness of his infinite perfections, is a greater manifestation of the divine glory than was ever revealed under the Old Testament dispensation. The second temple lacked the mercy-seat and the Shekinah, but when Christ came to it, who is the very fountain of mercy and the brightness of the divine glory, veiled, we grant, in human flesh, it surpassed in glory the ancient symbolic representations of the divine majesty and mercy, as indicated in the mercy-seat and divine light which beamed over it between the cherubim; and this we hold may be the meaning of Haggai's prophecy, "The glory of this house shall be greater than the former;" because Christ, the Prince of Peace, in whom "dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," honoured it with his personal presence, not as a common visitor, but to preach the gospel of peace: "I was daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye took me not." Mark xiv. 49.

Before dismissing this subject, respecting the rebuilding of the temple, it may be proper to remark that, although it is stated by historians that Herod finished the work in nine years and a half, this is to be understood only in reference to the completing of the rude

plan, for the artificial adorning of the temple and the final completion of its grand and complicated appendages certainly occupied a much longer period. Hence we read in John xi. 20, "Forty and six years hath this temple been in building." And in the "Jewish Antiquities," we are informed that while Gessius Florus was governor of Judea the works were completed, and 18,000 artificers were discharged, who had been engaged up to that time. "The whole of the buildings belonging to the temple were not finished till Nero's reign, when Albinus, the governor of Judea, was succeeded by Gissius Florus, which was eighty years after the eighteenth year of Herod's reign," the time when he commenced to build it. (See Ant.b. xv. c. xi. s. 1.; and b. xx. c. ix. s. 5, 7; and b. xx. c. ix. s. 5, 7.) A more splendid, gorgeous, and costly edifice was never erected on earth, and at the time the holy city was besieged by the Romans, it stood in all its glory; but it was completely destroyed and swept away by the last command of Titus after the siege, but not until he saw that it could not be saved: and he expressed an opinion that the Almighty had doomed it to perish.



CHAPTER XXVII.

Herod's Family Troubles, and his Character.

Herod and the Jews in Asia Minor—Herod's family troubles—Salome's diabolical plot—Alexander and Aristobulus, sons of Mariamne, accused of conspiring against Herod's life—Peace restored in the family—Alexander and Aristobulus again accused of plotting their father's death—Tried by Augustus, condemned, and executed—The conspiracy of Pheroras and Antipater against the life of Herod—The secret divulged by the wife of Pheroras, after his death—The policy of Antipater in going to Rome—He returns from Rome in expectation of his father's death and receiving the crown of Judea—He is arrested, tried, and condemned—His sentence sanctioned by Augustus—Kept in prison until just before the death of his father, when he was put to death—The reason why Josephus is silent on the birth of Christ and Herod's cruelty in murdering the babes of Bethlehem—The general idea, about the time Christ was born, that some distinguished personage was about to appear—The wise men of the East—Various opinions on the mysterious star which appeared to the wise men—Herod and the wise men—Herod's last acts of cruelty—His death and funeral—His general character—The Herodian family.



WE are reminded by one writer, who seems anxious to bring before his readers the virtues and excellencies of Herod, and to palliate his failings, that in justice to him mention should be made of the kind assistance which he gave to the Jewish

colonists of Asia Minor, and his successful endeavours to preserve their privileges, which in former times had been extended towards them. This transaction of Herod's, which is looked on by some as being very generous and praiseworthy, stands thus. In the year 14 B.C. Agrippa Vipsanius made an expedition against the inhabitants of Cimmerian Bosphorus, in which Herod united. After the campaign had been accomplished, and as they were returning together through Asia Minor they were met in Ionia by a company of Jews, who requested Agrippa to release them from the oppression which they suffered, and restore to them the privileges which had been conferred upon them by the senate. They complained of not being allowed to live under their own laws; of being compelled to attend the courts of justice; of being forced to serve in the army, to accept public offices, and to expend in such services their sacred treasures; and moreover they were robbed of the money which they collected for the purpose of transmitting to the temple at Jerusalem. On hearing these complaints, Herod interposed on their behalf, and obtained for them a confirmation of all the privileges of which they had been deprived. This is thought by some to have been a most gracious and generous act, worthy of being recorded as an undeniable proof and illustration of his generosity and friendship towards his countrymen. We cannot see it exactly in this light; for irrespective of any love or interest which he might feel in reference to the oppressed Jews, his own policy and selfishness would influence him to undertake their

cause, and endeavour to secure for them the privileges which they sought to obtain; that they might be the better able "to send their sacred money to Jerusalem," for the use of the temple then in course of erection.

The next ten years of Herod's life were not characterized by any events of more than ordinary importance. The work of building the temple went on, which engaged the attention of the people and afforded general satisfaction. Herod increased his family, by contracting various marriages, and in old age he began to realize, to his heart's sorrow, the disadvantages of a plurality of wives, in the jealousy and rivalries which sprung up amongst his aspiring sons, and the party feelings which existed in the minds of his brother and sister, who formed a part of his domestic establishment, and who had professed through life to be devoted to his interest. And when we consider the awful manner in which Herod conducted his family affairs, the multiplicity of his wives, his infamous conduct towards Mariamne, the Maccabean, and her nearest relations, we cannot feel astonished at his troubles in the decline of life. He made for himself a thorny path, and created circumstances which were almost certain to bring down his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.

The family history of Herod, in reference to three of his sons, as related by the Jewish historian, is of the most melancholy character, and forms such a tragical story that we can scarcely find a parallel in the annals of history. It seems more like a sorrowful romance, than a real historical narrative of events. Those who

wish to acquaint themselves with the minute details of this part of Herod's life, may do so by reading Josephus' *Ant. b. xvi. c. 2*, where the particulars are circumstantially related. Our object will be to give a brief account of the principal facts, in which Herod is shown to be the murderer of his sons, and the malicious intrigues of his sister Salome, in bringing about the consummation of this awful tragedy, in which she appears to have been more cruel, if possible, than Herod himself. Herod, it has been justly remarked, "does not appear to have been wanting in natural affection, but when his personal interest, in the maintenance of his authority, happened to clash with his paternal affection, at such times his ungovernable passions quickly overcame the dictates of nature and of justice." Salome, who was the principal agent in this diabolical plot, well knowing the peculiar disposition and temper of Herod, and being filled with malice against the two young princes, formed her revengeful plans accordingly, and carried them out with as much deception and skill as if she had been under the immediate influence of a demon; as the following facts will show.

By Mariamne, the Asmonean, whom Salome detested and whose death she caused, Herod had two sons, Alexander and Aristobulus, to whom he seemed particularly attached, and intended to make them the inheritors of his dominions. He therefore sent them to Rome to be educated, and introduced them to the notice of Augustus. When they had finished their education, he made another journey to Rome, and brought them back to

Judea. These facts show that Herod was really interested in the welfare of his sons, and bestowed upon them every mark of parental fondness, as though he were desirous to make amends by kindness to them for the injury which he had inflicted upon their murdered mother. When the two young princes returned to Jerusalem, after completing their education at the Roman court, such were their appearance and agreeable manners, that they soon became objects of admiration. They were moreover greatly endeared to the Jews by a consideration of their descent, on their mother's side, from the Maccabean heroes, a family of whom the Jews will ever be proud, and in whose estimation they will ever be entitled to the greatest honour and praise. Alexander was married to a Cappadocian princess, the daughter of Archelaus, and Aristobulus to his cousin, the daughter of the infamous Salome.

Herod seemed to take great pride in these two young princes, in whom (having finished their education, and married agreeably to his wishes) he would fondly hope to realize an increase of domestic happiness. But it was not long ere the peace of the family was broken, and the sun of prosperity went down under a dark and stormy sky, so that the declining monarch scarcely ever enjoyed another day's comfort during the remainder of his miserable life. Jealousy rose in the guilty mind of Herod's sister, who had been the principal cause of Mariamne's death (it may be supposed), from a fearful apprehension that her two sons, now introduced into court, and rising in the estimation of the people, would

gain power and avenge the blood of their murdered mother. This wretched and guilty woman, assisted by Pheroras, Herod's brother, and Antipater, Herod's eldest son by Doris, (also called Dosethea), devised a plot to bring about the destruction of the two young princes. They insinuated to Herod that Alexander and Aristobulus were devising plans to get rid of him for the sake of inheriting his dominions. Herod, on receiving this alarming intelligence, immediately sent off for Antipater, most likely at the suggestion of Salome, who had ever great influence over him, and shortly afterwards his mother also was permitted to return to the royal palace. (This lady had formerly been divorced on account of her inferior rank.) Antipater soon gained the favour and confidence of his father, and being supported by Salome and Pheroras, and stimulated by feelings of artful ambition, he succeeded in making his father believe that Alexander and Aristobulus were still plotting against his life. On this groundless accusation Herod charged them before Augustus with high treason. The emperor, however, on hearing the allegations did not deem them sufficiently sustained by evidence, and consequently induced Herod to be reconciled to his sons, and they returned to Jerusalem. The same parties being bent on the destruction of the two princes, again excited Herod's fears by having recourse to the former deceitful practice, and the royal residence soon became the seat of confusion. On this occasion Archelaus, king of Cappadocia, father-in-law of Alexander, interposed; and by using a little innocent duplicity he succeeded in

calming down the excitement of the enraged king, who had been made to believe his life was in danger, and peace was again apparently restored: this, however, was not of long continuance. The calm was only superficial and temporary, and therefore easily interrupted; and with such agents at work as before mentioned, the calm surface was soon ruffled and lashed into a dangerous tempest. Herod was again led to believe his life was in danger, and that his sons were really contriving murderous mischief against him. Alexander and Aristobulus were again accused and tried, and on this occasion condemned and executed. Their trial, which was specially appointed by Augustus, took place at Berytus in the presence of five hundred persons, on which occasion Herod pleaded in person against his sons, and succeeded in securing their condemnation, after which they were taken to Sebaste (Samaria), and put to death by strangulation. This revolting event took place five years before Christ. It is rather surprising that a man of Herod's genius and penetration did not detect the real conspirators ere it was too late; but his sister Salome being one of the party, whom he could not really suspect of any evil intentions towards him, was most likely what threw him off his guard, and led him to believe in the sincerity of the whole accusing party. But he felt himself guilty; the murder of Mariamne still troubled him, and he thought her sons now grown up were determined on avenging her death; he therefore concluded his safety demanded their death.

Alexander and Aristobulus now being removed out of the way, the real conspirators commenced operations by laying a plot to take away Herod's life and usurp his dominions. In this plot Salome took no part; for with all her duplicity, hypocrisy, and cruelty, she was ever true to her brother Herod in support of his authority, and in return he had full and unwavering confidence in her; too much so, as she more than once led him into mischief and crime.

The guilty parties in the real plot to take away Herod's life were Pheroras and Antipater. In palliation of their conduct it may be supposed they were actuated as much by fear of the murderous tyrant as any other feeling. From his past conduct, in reference to several of his relations, they knew that so long as he lived their own lives were in danger. They would also dread the influence of Salome, having seen the depths of her wickedness and her ability to operate upon Herod's mind; and as their own consciences would tell them they really deserved death, for being the instruments in bringing about the destruction of the innocents, they wickedly determined to remove out of existence the object of their terror; thinking, no doubt, that was the safest, if not the only method of securing their own lives. Thus one crime frequently leads to the commission of another. These two conspirators, before putting their design into execution, were separated. Pheroras was taken ill and died; very likely his disease and death were brought on by fear and over-anxiety. After the death of Pheroras, his widow, who knew of

the plot, divulged the awful secret, and produced the poison which was intended to be administered to Herod. Antipater, feeling conscious of the danger to which he was exposed, contrived to be called to Rome, that he might if possible escape punishment. But the case being carefully investigated, every avenue of information through which Antipater might receive communication was carefully watched, that he might remain ignorant of the discovery which had taken place since his arrival at Rome ; for other circumstances had transpired since he had left Jerusalem which clearly convicted him of being a party to this conspiracy. A messenger arrived from Rome with letters, who was suspected of being an agent in this affair, and on being put to the torture he confessed that he had brought poison for the other parties to use in case the former failed to prove effectual in causing the king's death. Antipater soon afterwards returned, expecting ere he arrived at Jerusalem to hear of his father's death, and was hypocritically preparing himself to play the solemn part of the chief mourner. But on reaching Sebaste he was informed that he was suspected of having taken a part in the conspiracy which had been brought to light, and that he must prepare to make his defence before Verus and the council. Herod was again called upon to accuse another of his sons of high treason. The accusation being made, Nicolaus Damascus, in an able address, pleaded to it. The guilty culprit, in an artful hypocritical speech, which indicated much of his father's spirit and craftiness, denied the

charge preferred against him ; but the proof of his guilt was so clearly demonstrated by Nicolaus that he was condemned and cast into prison. His sentence was sanctioned by Augustus, and Herod a few days before he died gave orders for him to be put to death, and commanded that he should be buried in an ignoble manner.

A short time before the death of Herod, Christ was born, and one of the last acts of Herod's tyrannical life was an attempt to destroy the Saviour of the world, by his sanguinary mandate that all the babes in Bethlehem, "and in all the coast thereof, from two years old and under," should be slain, thinking that putting in force this command, he should secure the death of him "who was born King of the Jews." On the birth of Christ, and a few circumstances associated therewith, we shall now offer a few observations.

1. It is a fact worthy of our notice, that on the birth of Christ, and of Herod's slaughtering the young children in Bethlehem, the Jewish historian makes no mention ; but his silence on these subjects may be easily accounted for. On matters pertaining to Christianity he never meddled. He does indeed once mention Christ, in respectful and reverential terms ; but with regard to his Messiahship, the doctrines which he taught, and the distinguishing characteristics of his life, he refrains from offering any decided opinion. And with regard to the public transactions of the Saviour's life, and the manner of his death, which might have been recorded as simple facts of Jewish history, he makes no particular records, only that he was condemned

by Pilate to suffer the death of the cross. Neither does he particularly mention any matters in relation to the early developments of Christianity, from which we can gather his fixed opinions on this vital subject. Whatever might have been his private opinions in relation thereto, he seems designedly to have avoided giving them publicity. Perhaps the strongest expressions which he uttered indicative of his conversion to Christianity, are those referred to by Justin Martyr, in his "Dialogue with Trypho," where Josephus says, "Jesus appeared to his followers alive the third day after his crucifixion, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him." Here Josephus acknowledges Christ to be the particular person who had been the subject of divine prophecy, or the promised Messiah. Most likely he was what is called "a Jewish Nazarene, or Ebionite," *i.e.*, one who believed Jesus of Nazareth to be the true Messiah without believing in his Godhead or true divinity; who also believed in the necessity of observing the ceremonial laws of Moses in order to salvation. But these opinions, we admit, he nowhere openly avows or clearly defines as his fixed creed. His object appears to have been to write the history of his own nation, as far as possible, apart from Christianity, and therefore he says but little either about Christ or his followers.

2. Just previous to the birth of Christ there was a prevalent expectation throughout the eastern part of the Roman empire that some remarkable person was about to be born in Judea, who the Romans predicted

would be their emperor and should have universal dominion; while the Jews believed he would be the promised Messiah, who should free them from the Roman yoke, and elevate their nation to unprecedented grandeur and greatness. Suetonius, in his life of Vespasian, says, "There has been for a long time, all over the east, a constant persuasion that it was in the Fates that at that time some one should come to Judea, who should obtain universal dominion. It appeared by the events that this prediction referred to the Roman emperor, but the Jews, referring it to themselves, rebelled." And Tacitus says, "The generality had a strong persuasion that it was contained in the ancient writings of the priests that at that very time the East should prevail, and that some who should come out of Judea should obtain the empire of the world, which ambiguities foretold Vespasian and Titus. But the common people, appropriating to themselves, by interpretation, the vast grandeur foretold by the Fate, nor could be brought to change their opinions for the true by all their adversities." Josephus and Philo, Jewish historians, make mention of the same expectation, and speak of the subject in similar terms to those employed by the Roman historians. It is therefore evident that the general expectation was that some distinguished person was about to make his appearance. Under the influence of this persuasion certain "wise men of the east," having observed the appearance of a particular star in the direction of Jerusalem, concluded that it indicated the birth of the expected personage, and

therefore following in the direction of the star came to Jerusalem to worship him, or to pay him suitable homage and civil reverence. We name this circumstance because it led to a practical development of Herod's feelings towards Christ. Relative to the wise men of the east, and the star by which they were guided to Bethlehem, where they found the infant Saviour, much curious criticism and useless argumentation have been indulged. All that we can say on this subject, and all that seems necessary for us to know, may, we think, be summed up in a very few words.

It appears from the reading of the sacred narrative that certain men, noted for their wisdom, residing in the east, observed a phenomenon in the heavens, which had the appearance of an unusual star, which they supposed to indicate the birth of the extraordinary person then looked for by the Jews and Romans, who should rise to distinguished power and dominion. Under the influence of this conviction they determined to follow the guidance of that star wherever it might lead them, and to take with them suitable gifts to present with their homage to this person, wherever they might find him, in a palace or in the most humble abode. They were guided to Jerusalem, where they inquired after the person who was "born king of the Jews," stating that they had seen his star in the east, whence they came, and had come to worship him. When Herod heard of these things, "he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him." He therefore called the members of the chief council together, and the scribes who wrote down and had the charge of

the civil and religious records of the nation, for the purpose of making inquiry respecting the birth of the Messiah, his object being to ascertain from prophecy where the Messiah should be born, that he might strike an effectual blow. He made no inquiry as to the time, as most likely he was satisfied, by some means, on this point, but he wished to know the particular place. "And they said unto him, in Bethlehem of Judea; for thus it is written by the prophet, 'And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Judea, art not the least among the princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people Israel.'" This information was very pointed and explicit, distinguishing the place from any other of the same name, and asserting that he who should thus be born there should be ruler in Israel. Then Herod called the wise men into his private apartment, and inquired of them particularly as to the precise time the star appeared to them, that he might know the exact time Christ was born, his design being to destroy him; but he clothed his dark design with the appearance of religion. "Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also." But the feeling of his heart and the design of his mind were evidently not in harmony with his words. His intention evidently was—Bring me word that I may go and kill him. The wise men departed, and went in the direction of Bethlehem, when the star appeared to them again, by which they were assured that they were under divine guidance, "and they rejoiced with exceed-

ing great joy." The guiding star went before them until it stood over the house in which they found the divine child and his virgin mother; and feeling assured he was the person whom they sought, they immediately fell down and worshipped him. They also presented him with suitable gifts, "of gold, frankincense, and myrrh." "And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way." Thus ends the story or narrative of the wise men and the star which they saw in the east; simple, plain, and truthful as any historical record we have ever read, and needs no critical illustration or explanation. But it would be endless to discuss, and useless even to mention, the various opinions which have been offered by learned men on this subject, as to who the wise men were, and what was the star which appeared to them and guided them to Bethlehem. Some of these opinions, which display considerable ability and information on learned subjects, do not give much evidence of sober judgment and solid sense. We may just mention one opinion, which appears very improbable, though elaborated with a respectable show of learning. I refer to that which supposes the star (which appeared to the wise men) was a remarkable constellation visible at that time in the heavens, consisting of three large planets, viz., Jupiter, Saturn, and Mars, along with a fixed star, all grouped together in juncture position, giving the appearance of one large star. The same constellation, we are told, appeared at the birth of Moses, and also

about the time of the birth of Isaiah. But a constellation of this kind would have been seen by men generally as well as by the wise men.

We may also remark that such a constellation could not possibly lead them to a particular house. This we all know by our own observations on planetary phenomena. For instance, if the moon, which is a body much nearer to us than the planets above mentioned, appears to be immediately over any particular place or locality, on our approach to that place the phenomenon changes, and the moon appears in some other distant place. The idea of Jupiter, Saturn, Mars, and a fixed star being grouped together and standing over a certain house, and there remaining apparently stationary, appears ridiculous. We think the appearance was neither a real natural star, nor a number of planets in conjunction, but some kind of luminous meteor of an extraordinary kind, the motion of which was supernaturally directed, leading the wise men to Bethlehem, and to the house where they found the infant Saviour; then, very likely, it either encircled his person or stood over him. Herod, on finding that the wise men returned not to Jerusalem to give him information concerning the place where they found Christ, regarded himself as mocked or deceived; he therefore determined on a most cruel plan in order to make sure of taking away the life of the infant child, by slaying all the infants in Bethlehem and the coast thereof who were under two years of age. But before this horrible decree was carried into practice Joseph and Mary, with their child, being warned of

God, fled into Egypt, where they remained until Herod was dead.

The disease which terminated the life of this notoriously wicked and impenitent tyrant was regarded by the Jews as judicial. It is described by Josephus as having been the most miserable which can possibly be imagined, in relation to both body and mind. The account which is given by Eusebius of his complicated afflictions and miserable death is so frightful and nauseous that we choose not to transcribe it. Enough to say that he was tortured and wasted with internal burning, ravenously hungry, but was never satisfied whatever he ate; his bowels were so ulcerated that he was in continual agony; his legs, and especially his feet, were swollen to an enormous size, from which continually issued a phlegmatic and shining humour; at length the lower and most sensitive parts of his body became ulcerated and vermiculous; there were also other offensive symptoms, so that all parts of his body were convulsed. "Thus he died in horrible pain and torment, smitten of God in this signal and grievous manner for his many enormous iniquities." The state of his mind while enduring unutterable agony of body was most dreadful. His torments, instead of moving him to repentance and to seek for divine mercy, seemed rather to excite and actuate him to greater cruelties.

Herod had greatly provoked the Jews by erecting two large golden eagles over the gate of the temple, in honour of the Romans. When he was so ill that they thought he would never recover, the chief Jews, Mat-

thias and Judas, excited the populace to pull them down, and to break them in pieces. The dying monarch hearing of this, commanded the soldiers to seize the principal actors in the affair, with the two chieftains, who, when brought before Herod, boldly confessed what they had done, and expressed a regret they had not done it sooner; whereon he ordered them to be burnt alive. He also deposed the high priest on suspicion that he had encouraged them. And not being satisfied with this, he formed a project for shedding the blood of some of his subjects immediately after his death, in order to secure a general mourning on the occasion. He knew that the Jews hated him because he had insulted their religious feelings with his heathenish conduct, and that they would not lament his death, but rather rejoice because they were delivered from a despotic tyrant. He therefore projected this sanguinary measure to cause a general lamentation at the time of his decease. He commanded that the chief of the Sanhedrim should come to Jericho, where he was then lying apparently in a dying state, and as soon as they arrived he gave orders that they should be shut up in the hippodrome, or circus, and instructed Salome and her husband to put them all to death as soon as he breathed his last, saying he would damp the joy of the people occasioned by his departure, and cause a real mourning for his death. Thus we see he sustained his real character to the very last: Salome, bad as she was, did not dare to carry this infernal scheme into execution.

Before Herod died he was so dreadfully enraged and

tormented with painful reflections that he was driven to madness and desperation. His agony of body and mind became intolerable, and he rashly attempted to commit suicide, on which occasion his grandson, Achiah, gave a loud scream, and prevented him from plunging the fatal weapon into his bosom. The alarm thus created ran through the palace, and Antipater, his condemned son, who was then confined under guard, supposed his father was dead, and offered a bribe to the jailor, if he would allow him to escape. This was communicated to Herod, who, without hesitation, gave orders for his execution. This act seemed to refresh his spirit, for nothing apparently afforded him so much satisfaction as shedding blood. "*After this he revived for a few days,*" during which period he re-constructed his will, in which he gave the kingdom of Judea to Archelaus; Galilee and Perea to Antipas; Gaulonitis, Trachonitis and Batanea to Philip; and the cities of Jamnia Arotus, and Phasaclis with considerable sums of money, to Salome. Thus Herod's kingdom was divided at his death, and shortly afterwards the whole was reduced to a mere province of the Roman empire.

Herod disposed of his personal property in various large legacies to his several relatives; to Augustus and his wife Julia he bequeathed handsome sums, worthy of being received by such illustrious personages. Thus died Herod the Great, and his spirit appeared before the tribunal of his Maker, to give an account of his stewardship. We make no comment on his destiny, knowing that the Judge of the whole earth will do right.

His poor body, which was nothing but an offensive mass of corruption, was gorgeously arrayed in trappings of sepulchral grandeur, and disposed of under the direction of Archelaus, with all the splendour of funeral pomp, in a manner corresponding to the dignity of his elevated station in life (see Josephus' Wars of the Jews, close of c. 1). On the general character of this remarkable man, who lived at a very eventful period of our world's history, and in that region of the globe where the most important events took place, we may venture to offer a few remarks. No man can attentively read the life of Herod, as delineated by several able authors, without observing that in early life he gave evident signs, and very soon full proof, that he naturally possessed those qualities and powers of mind which constitute what is designated "a decided character." He was a man of firmness and decision. He could discern, judge, and conclude for himself. His mental endowments were of a high order; far superior to those possessed by the generality of his contemporaries. He displayed great sagacity and skillfulness in the plans and execution of his political schemes, and in cases of emergency he exemplified magnanimity, and braved danger with a coolness and intrepidity which demonstrated a vast amount of self-possession and confidence in his own superior abilities. He had a particular taste for magnificence and splendour, hence he was remarkably fond of embellishment and aggrandisement, and at times he was bountiful. But in moral qualities, generally, he was below the common level of humanity. He was proud, ambitious, revenge-

ful, and tyrannical; a man of licentious morals and criminal habits. He had no fixed principles of religion, but the general bent of his mind was towards heathenism. As a governor he was oppressive, unjust, and cruel to a proverb. One writer goes so far as to say, "In every sense of the term, Herod was one of the most odious, sanguinary, and brutal tyrants who ever cursed the world; his reign was filled with the most horrible carnage, and the most revolting public and domestic tragedies; and his name will descend to the latest posterity degraded by all the infamy of the most inhuman barbarities, and the most abominable crimes." Though this delineation of Herod's *moral* character is terrible, it is no exaggeration. Facts almost innumerable might be selected from his practical conduct in proof of these apparently severe assertions. While on the other hand, scarcely anything can be truthfully said illustrative of his virtue or moral goodness.

We shall conclude this chapter with a few observations on the Herodian family. Josephus says, "Herod was married nine times," yet from other parts of his work it appears that he was married ten times. In Ant., b. xvii. c. 16, he distinctly mentions the names of nine wives, and then he refers to Mariamne the Asmonean, as though she was a mere concubine; for he says, "As for his eldest daughter by the *same mother*, with Alexander and Aristobulus." This discrepancy is not corrected by Whiston, nor mentioned by Prideaux. The fact is, he was married ten times. It may be important to notice this on account of what is subsequently stated

respecting his posterity, whose names frequently occur both in the New Testament and in profane history.

THE HERODIAN FAMILY.

<i>Herod's Wives.</i>	<i>Children.</i>	<i>Grandchildren.</i>
1. Doris, thought to be an Idumean.	Antipater (put to death by his father.)	
2. Mariamne the Asmonean.	Alexander and Aristobulus (put to death by their father.)	Agrippa, Herod
3. His brother's daughter.	No issue.	
4. His sister's daughter.	Do.	
5. Mariamne, daughter of Simon.	Herod, Philip, and Salome.	
6. Matthace, a Samaritan.	Archelaus and Antipas.	Glaphyros.
7. Cleopatra, of Jerusalem.	Herod Philip.	
8. Pallas.	Phasaelus.	
9. Phadra.	Roxana.	
10. Elpida.	Salome.	Bernice.

There were also several daughters and granddaughters, who married their near relations. Herod's family continued to occupy offices under the Roman emperors for three generations, when they became historically extinct.



CHAPTER XXVIII.

The Herodian Dynasty.



Archelaus claims the crown of Judea—His favourable reception—His conciliatory address—Jerusalem all in confusion—Civil war—Sabinus, the Syrian procurator, marches into Judea—Banditti of desperadoes—Much bloodshed in Jerusalem—Varus puts down the insurrection—Antipas supplants Archelaus—Archelaus appointed Ethuarch—The division of Herod's dominions—The immense riches of Herod at the time of his death—The Jews would not tolerate the tyranny of Archelaus—Archelaus accused by his relatives, cast into prison, where he dies—Philip and Antipas—John the Baptist.



HEROD, in his last will, bequeathed the dominion of Judea to Archelaus, but before he could legally claim the crown it required the confirmation of the Roman emperor. The civil and military authorities, however, readily admitted his title to the throne, and the people generally demonstrated their loyalty towards him, fully expecting that he would be their future king. Hence, when the will of Herod was publicly read in the amphitheatre of Jericho to the officers of the kingdom who had assembled, the multi-

tude present on the occasion exclaimed, "Long live King Archelaus," accompanied with the promise of allegiance to his person and regal authority; and they proclaimed him king. Without waiting the sanction of Rome, he entered on the functions of his imperial office. It will be necessary here just to notice, that Herod left four sons, besides several daughters, viz., Herod Philip, the son of Mariamne, daughter of Simon; Archelaus and Antipas, sons of Malhace, a Samaritan; and Philip, the son of Cleopatra, of Jerusalem. We mention these names here because we shall have occasion to speak of them in the following pages.

After the funeral of Herod and seven days of sham mourning for the deceased monarch, Archelaus ascended the golden throne, from which he delivered a conciliatory address, in which he respectfully acknowledged the goodwill of the people shown towards him, and the respect which they had manifested towards his father, notwithstanding the injuries he had done to them; and he promised that, if Cæsar confirmed his appointment, and settled the testament of his father, he should not fail to reward them for their kindness and loyalty. This was the substance of his address, and the people, believing him to be sincere, instantly demanded a manifestation of his favour. Some required an alleviation of the tribute, others to have the customs abolished, and others the release of the state prisoners; while others began to bewail the deaths of those who had been executed by Herod for pulling down the golden eagle which had been placed over the gate of the temple,

and some went so far as to demand the lives of those who had been instrumental in their destruction, so that in a short time the whole city of Jerusalem was in confusion, and before Archelaus had time to obtain the sanction of Augustus Cæsar to govern Judea, dissatisfaction had spread throughout the land, and assumed the aspect of a civil war. Sabinus, the procurator of Syria, marched to Jerusalem to take possession of the treasures left by Herod, and not satisfied with this he plundered the temple of immense riches, and then set fire to the sacred edifice, in which many of the Jews perished, some by the flames, and some by their own hands. The whole nation was in a state of anarchy, all civil regulations being disregarded. One Judas, whose father Herod had sacrificed, thought it a favourable opportunity of revenging his father's death on the royal family and enriching himself, raised a banditti, and seized the treasures and armoury of Sepphoris, from which he equipped a number of his adherents, and these desperadoes soon overran the region of Galilee, and became the terror of the country.

In another district, Athronges, a man of gigantic stature, though formerly only a common shepherd, with his four brothers, raised a numerous gang, who were so bold and desperate in their operations, that they became a terror both to the Romans and Herodians. Another man of great personal accomplishments actually aspired to the throne. He destroyed and plundered the royal palace at Jericho, and continued a career of battle, plunder and devastation for a considerable length of

time. In this insurrection we discover the natural outbreak of those feelings which had been created under the tyrannical reign and oppression of Herod ; and now the old lion was dead, before whose ferocity, power, and craft they were not able to stand, they came forth to revenge the family of their oppressor for the wrongs they had received under his cruel government, and doubtless, many ill-disposed people, whom he had not particularly injured, were glad of the opportunity of uniting with them for the sake of plunder and ruin.

Archelaus attempted to put down these riots by military force, which occasioned much bloodshed, especially in Jerusalem, where the people had assembled in vast multitudes, being the time of the Passover. A centurion, with a strong military force, was commanded to arrest the ringleaders of the disturbance, but on his being attacked, the whole multitude rose up in defence of their leaders, on which about three thousand were put to death with the edge of the sword. This dreadful blow was the commencement of a civil tornado, which subsequently swept over the land, and deluged it with human blood. Varus at length marched an army into Judea to subdue the insurgents, and effect the relief of Sabinus. He reduced Sepphoris to ashes, and partially destroyed other strongholds. He captured many of the rebels, and condemned two thousand to be crucified, when the rest grounded their arms, and ceased hostilities, and by degrees the country was restored to tranquillity.

As to Archelaus, immediately after he had caused such a general slaughter at the Passover, having fears

that measures were in operation for Antipas to supplant him, proceeded to Rome to secure the investiture of the kingdom. These fears were not groundless, for the family of Herod were in favour of Antipas, and the whole nation had taken a dislike to Archelaus, looking upon his conduct as the commencement of a despotic government and a bloody reign, and they were determined, if possible, to throw off his yoke. The people therefore sent a deputation to Rome with instructions to request Augustus to reduce Judea to a Roman province. This was supported by 8,000 Jews who resided in Rome, and was not objected to by the Herodian family, who had taken a dislike to Archelaus. Moreover, Antipas laboured to show that when Herod made his last will he was not in a sound and competent state of mind, and intimated that the previous will of the monarch ought to be received in preference to the document produced by Archelaus. Archelaus was also charged by the Jewish deputation and by Antipater, Salome's son, with assuming royal authority without the sanction of the emperor, and urged against him his unfitness to govern, seeing he had manifested such cruelty and injustice in attacking the people and slaughtering them at the Passover.

Archelaus had taken with him Nicolas Damascus, an able orator, who had long been employed in the service of Herod, the late king, and who, with his usual eloquence, answered on behalf of his new master, and was so far successful as to secure the appointment of Archelaus, with the inferior title of *Ethnarch*,

which signifies merely the chief of a nation, but not having kingly power; with the promise that if he proved himself worthy of being a king he should have that title conferred upon him. The other parts of Herod's dominions were also distributed by Augustus according to the wishes of the deceased monarch; and the fifteen hundred talents which he had bequeathed to Augustus the emperor generously divided among the surviving descendants of Herod, reserving for himself only some articles, which he kept, not so much for their real value, as memorials of old friendship which had long existed between them.

From what is stated by Josephus respecting the will and bequests of Herod, it appears that he died immensely rich; and yet during his life his expenditure was unaccountably large, so that he must have had recourse to other means than his ordinary income in order to increase his wealth. Dr. Whiston calculates that the amount of Herod's income, to which he was legally entitled from his dominions, was about £630,000 per annum. But even this large sum bears but a small proportion to his vast expenses, as mentioned by historians, and the enormous sums he bequeathed in his will. Like many other imperial tyrants, he obtained money by many unjustifiable means, such as confiscation, heavy fines to save life, additional taxation, and plunder. The complaints which the Jewish ambassadors made to Augustus are quite sufficient to justify such a conclusion. The ambassadors, when speaking to Cæsar, said, "He filled the nation with the utmost

degree of poverty; and when, upon unjust pretences, he had slain any of the nobility, he took away their estates; and when he permitted any of them to live, he condemned them to the forfeiture of what they possessed, and besides the annual impositions which he laid upon every one of them, they were to make liberal presents to himself, to his domestic friends, and such of his slaves as were vouchsafed the favour of being his tax gatherers, because there was no way of obtaining a freedom from unjust violence without giving either gold or silver." There are also other abuses mentioned by historians at which the heart sickens to record. (Ant. xviii. c. xi. s. 2.) Well might the Jews wish to be delivered from such a curse as the Herodian tyranny, and to come altogether under the Roman government. Pagan Romanism was certainly preferable to semi-pagan Herodianism; but the Jews were doomed to suffer for the reasons assigned by Moses and the prophets.

Archelaus, on returning to Judea, invested with power to govern that part of the nation allotted him by Cæsar, began to imitate the conduct, and to tread in the steps of his honoured father, but the Jews were determined not to tolerate his procedure, and obtaining the assistance of his brothers, he was accused of various disgusting crimes, brought before the tribunal of his royal master, and was very justly transported for life. All his wealth was confiscated, Judea was reduced to a Roman province, and placed under the government of Syria. Thus, according to Jacob's prediction, the sceptre now finally departed from Judah. The adjudications

of Cæsar were executed by Cyrenius the Syrian governor, and Archelaus was banished into exile, where he ended his worthless life. This was the man who was dreaded by Joseph on his return out of Egypt. "Who when he heard that Archelaus reigned in Judea in the room of his father, Herod, was afraid to go thither." Matt. ii. 22.

With regard to Philip and Herod Antipas, who shared with Archelaus their father's dominions, and whose names are mentioned in the gospel, we may just remark that Philip governed as Tetrarch of Trachonitis for 37 years, and that he died in the twelfth year of Tiberius, leaving no issue, and at his death, his dominion was attached to the province of Cœlo-Syria. Herod Antipas, who governed Galilee, was the person who beheaded John the Baptist, and who examined and insulted our blessed Saviour on the morning of his crucifixion. The cause of his murdering the valiant Apostle of the wilderness, as stated by Josephus, was on account of his entertaining an idea that John had gained over the minds of the people an influence which the tyrant dreaded. But the evangelist ascribes his death rather to the anger of Herodias, who would not forgive him on account of his faithful dealing in reference to her unlawful marriage with Herod. Both circumstances might have to do with the execution of this cruel act. There is no doubt that the influence of John over the minds of the common people would be a source of annoyance to the king, who was "Herod-like," jealous of his own authority, and therefore when Herodias demanded the

head of the Baptist, from motives of revenge, Herod's own fears of John's prosperity might readily induce him to fulfil his promise, though he might hypocritically profess to do it reluctantly.

In the two following chapters we shall endeavour to offer some appropriate remarks on John the Baptist and Jesus Christ.






CHAPTER XXIX.

John the Baptist.



John the Baptist—A most distinguished personage—Isaiah's prediction concerning him—His birth and parentage—Considered as the forerunner of Christ—He enters on his ministry—The character of his ministry—He baptises Christ—Christ's testimony of John—John compared with Elijah—The success of his ministry—What he says of Christ—He dies a martyr for the truth.

“N those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matt. iii. 1. This was in the year 26 A.D. In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod Antipas tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituræa, Annas was the high priest, and Caiaphas was his deputy, or what the Jews called “Sagua Cohanim,” or ruler of the temple. John the Baptist, though clothed in mean apparel and fed upon the produce of the wilderness, was no ordinary person, but a distinguished personage, on whom God conferred the peculiar honour of being the harbinger of his only son. This illustrious herald of king Messiah had been pre-

viously announced by the inspired Hebrew prophets, who spoke of him under different appellations indicative of his office, and the character which he would sustain. Isaiah speaks of him as a pioneer, as well as a herald, in the following significant language: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a high-way for our God, every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain." Isa. xl. 3. If this prediction refers primarily to the return of the Jews out of their Babylonish captivity, as several commentators have supposed, we think it may very safely be applied to John the Baptist, who, in the natural and moral wilderness of Judea, by his teaching prepared the way of the Lord, or the minds of the people for the preaching of Christ, which immediately followed. We cannot be mistaken in thus applying the prediction, since the inspired evangelist when speaking of John, says, "This is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." And by the mouth of the prophet Malachi, Jehovah says, "I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me." (iv. 5.) He is also designated Elijah the prophet—"Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord."

As John was made the subject of divine prophecy, the circumstances attending his birth were suitable to

these prophetic declarations. Particular and honourable mention is made by the evangelist of his parentage. His father, Zacharias, was a priest of the course of Abia, and his mother, Elizabeth, was a daughter of Aaron. These particulars are recorded to show that John was of sacerdotal descent; his father being a priest, and his mother the daughter of a priest, proves that he descended from the family of Amram,—the same family as were Moses and Aaron, and many other illustrious characters particularly distinguished in Jewish history. It is moreover said that his parents were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." Living in the faithful discharge of their civil and religious duties in relation to both God and their fellow men, not only blameless as touching the law, and particular in observing the rites and ceremonies of their religion, but they also possessed the spirit of religion, and were righteous before God. Many who filled the priest's office in those days were unworthy characters, whose conduct was a disgrace to their profession and high vocation, but not so with the pious father of John the Baptist. He was inwardly righteous, while his outward conduct was consistent with his sacred calling; his wife also was a woman of decided piety.

The circumstances of John's birth were extraordinary, like those in relation to Isaac, who was a type of Christ. When John was born his father and mother were well stricken in years. This is particularly mentioned to show that humanly speaking, according to the laws of

nature, this pious pair would have died childless had not God ordered it otherwise, as he did in the case of Abraham and Sarah.

As Zacharias was ministering before the Lord in the temple there appeared unto him a heavenly messenger, an angel of the Lord. Such a messenger had not been seen among the Jews for the space of four hundred years, since the time the prophetic visions ceased amongst them: it was no wonder therefore that Zacharias should be filled with fear when he saw the angel, and especially so when we consider the degenerate state of the Jewish nation. The pious priest would most likely conclude that the angel had appeared unto him to pronounce some terrible judgment upon the city or nation, "For the wickedness of the people that dwelt therein." But he was told by the angel not to be afraid, that he was come to announce to him that he should have a son, who would be great in the sight of the Lord, and be filled with the Holy Ghost from his birth; that he would go forth among the people in the spirit and power of Elijah, and turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. After delivering this message the angel declared who he was: "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings." In six months subsequent to this period the same celestial messenger was sent from God to Mary, the honoured mother of our blessed Saviour, to make a divine communication in reference to the incarnation of the Mes-

siah, and to declare the greatness of the man Christ Jesus, who should be born to save the people from their sins, and would reign over a kingdom of which there should be no end. On this occasion Gabriel also made particular mention of John, who was born in about three months afterwards.

Soon after the birth of John the spirit of prophecy came upon Zacharias, and he foretold the greatness of his new-born son, and the peculiar honour conferred upon him by the Almighty:—"And thou, child, shall be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto the people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." From this prophetic announcement it appears that John was the immediate forerunner of Jesus Christ, and that none was to succeed him in his ministry but the Son of God himself. John was to be the honoured agent, under God, of preparing the minds of the people to receive Christ and his doctrine.

Nothing more is stated respecting the early life of this wonderful person by the evangelist, only that, "The child grew and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the desert till the day of his showing unto Israel." The phrase, "waxed strong in spirit," seems to indicate that he became a man of strong mental powers and vigorous intellect. His understanding was divinely illuminated,

and he became strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, so that at a proper time, when he was called to enter upon his ministerial work, he was fully prepared for a faithful discharge of those duties connected with his high and important office. It is supposed that John did not commence his ministry until he was about thirty years of age, and up to that period of his life he dwelt in comparative obscurity "in the desert," most likely in some country place of no notoriety near Nazareth. And when he opened his mission, it was not in the great and renowned city of Jerusalem, but in the wilderness, or among the country villages. But such was the singularity of his life and manners, and the extraordinary influence which attended his preaching, that great multitudes were allured to follow him; towards whom he acted in a manner consistent with his high and holy calling. He used no means to excite them to rebellion, or to agitate political reform, or to create in their minds any dissatisfaction towards those in civil authority; but otherwise, he taught submission, loyalty, obedience, and piety towards God and man. The Pharisees and the Sadducees he severely reproved for their degeneracy and hypocrisy, and faithfully warned them to flee from the wrath to come by bringing forth fruits meet for repentance. He pointedly cautioned them against false pretences grounded on their relationship to Abraham, "the friend of God." To the publicans and soldiers who came unto him for instruction he gave the most suitable and seasonable advice, and urged upon all men the necessity of immediately turning to

God by repentance and reformation of life; he moreover faithfully forewarned them of the impending judgments which were about to come upon the Jewish nation. He disclaimed all pretensions to his being the promised Messiah, and referred them to one mightier than himself, who should come after him, and whose shoe's latches he was not worthy to unloose.

We may further notice that John had the peculiar honour of baptising Christ in the river Jordan, on which performance he expressed some reluctance, on account of the Saviour's superiority, but on the exposition of the Saviour he consented. On this occasion he was favoured with a most glorious manifestation of divine approbation, and a declaration that the person whom he had baptised was the Son of God. As Jesus came out of the water, having been baptised, "The heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, lighting upon him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." We regard the blessed Virgin, of whom the Saviour was born, and John the Baptist, who was his herald, as being the two most honoured individuals that ever lived on earth. If any further confirmation be required to establish the dignity of John, we find it recorded in Matt. xi. 11, where Christ bears testimony to his greatness and the elevation of his office. Referring to John, he says, "But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet." A man sustaining a character and an office more elevated and sacred than the

most distinguished among the inspired prophets of antiquity. Most of these ancient worthies had clearly predicted the coming and character of Messiah, and Isaiah in particular had distinguished himself for the sublimity and clearness of his writings on these subjects; but the apostle of the wilderness surpassed them all. He lived in the time of Christ, and was the honoured instrument of introducing him to the notice of the nation, and of proclaiming without any ambiguity that he was the true "Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world." He was therefore "more than a prophet." He took a part in the glorious work which the prophets had foretold, in preparing the way of the Lord. "For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee." Matt. xi. 11. Christ having declared the superiority of John, contrasted with the inspired prophets, comes to the climax of his eulogium, "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." He also speaks of him as the person predicted by Malachi, (c. iv.) under the name of Elijah, who should come to prepare the way of the Lord. That is, Christ acknowledged him to be the identical person spoken of in this prediction.

John might be designated Elijah by the prophet, on account of the similarity there would be between these two remarkable individuals. In many respects they resembled each other. Elijah was a distinguished oral prophet who rose in Israel in the reign of Ahab. He

came forth out of obscurity, without formal introduction, and at once entered on his great mission. He appeared in a coarse external garb, took refuge in the wilderness, was noted for his piety, manifested singular boldness and undaunted courage in the discharge of his duties, was successful in overthrowing idolatry, and was the forerunner of a great national reform which took place under the administration of Jehu and his successors, who destroyed the house of Ahab that had for a long time been persecutors of the true worshippers. In these particulars John resembled Elijah. He was clothed with a raiment of camel's hair and a leathern girdle about his loins; he commenced his ministry in the wilderness of Judea; he was a man of unflinching intrepidity and amazing boldness, as is seen in the case of his reproving Herod; and he was successful in the accomplishment of the work to which he was divinely appointed. He is spoken of as "a voice *crying* in the wilderness," which seems to denote vehemence as to the manner of his preaching. He had to waken up a drowsy slumbering world to thoughtfulness and reformation of life; and he must therefore "lift up his voice like a trumpet, cry aloud and spare not; show the people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins." This he faithfully did, for no earthly power could overawe him, nor could any obloquy suppress his exertions. Like the Saviour, he was charged with being confederate with the prince of darkness, for his enemies said, "he hath a devil;" others reviled and persecuted him, but none of these things moved him, for he counted not his

life dear to himself when it stood in the way of duty. He boldly censured that spiritual pride which was built merely on the ceremonial observance of the law, so prevalent among the self-righteous pharisees, whom he admonished to produce better evidence of their sincerity: "O ! ye generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? bring forth fruit meet for repentance." As though he said, Bring no cunning dissimulation, or hypocrisy, but something to show that you are willing to reform your lives. Let your sincerity be demonstrated by forsaking all sin. No other fruit would satisfy this upright and holy man of God. No merely change of opinion, or sentimentalism was sufficient, in the estimation of this burning and shining light, to furnish proof of solid and saving piety. His preaching was like that of Christ's to Nicodemus: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;" and John insisted on the necessity of this change of heart and life. He not only taught piety towards God, but also disinterested love to mankind, as did also Christ: "He that hath two coats let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat let him do likewise." Hence he prepared the people for the teaching of Christ, who preached this doctrine in his celebrated sermon on the mount.

What deserves our special attention in reference to the teaching of John is, he testified of the greatness and grandeur of Christ, describing him as the Bridegroom of the Church; and greatly rejoiced because he

felt himself and showed himself to be the friend of this heavenly bridegroom. He said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." "I am not that Christ; this I told you from the beginning, but I am to bear witness of him." Christ, who is from above, "is above all;" superior to Moses and the prophets, and greater than all created beings in the universe. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands." The prophets received the Spirit by measure, but in Christ dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Therefore, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not on the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." John the Baptist also pointed to Christ as the great propitiatory sacrifice that should be offered up to atone for the sins of the human race, and in connection therewith he declared him to be the Son of God. Pointing to Christ, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me. * * * I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. * * * And I saw and bear record that this is the Son of God." John i. 29-33. This was the substance of John's preaching—repentance, or turning from sin and Satan to God; practical holiness and faith in Christ as the Saviour of the world. And in these doctrines he continued steadfast unto the end of his life, and his conduct throughout was consistent with his teaching.

He was successful in his mission. "There went out

to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the regions round about Jordan" (Matt. iii. 5) "and were baptized of him in Jordan." This text alone is sufficient to indicate his great popularity. Though it is to be understood as hyperbolical phraseology, it conveys the idea of people flocking to his ministry from all parts of the country, and of being so wrought upon by his preaching as to become his disciples. And it is worthy of notice that he bore all this popularity without being the least inflated with vanity or intoxicated with pride. His whole demeanour testified deep humility and unfeigned lowliness of mind. He disclaimed all praise and personal distinction indicative of superiority, and uniformly directed his hearers and disciples to that distinguished and glorious Being whose way he was come to prepare, and declared himself unworthy even to be his servant, or so much as to loosen his shoe latchets. John was a burning and shining light, but the true Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world—the Light of Life—had a far brighter lustre and a wider radiance, of which John came to bear witness.

The ministerial career of John was but of short duration. *Herod Antipas*, being alarmed at his popularity or influence over the common people, sent for him, on which occasion he pointedly and severely reproved the king for his profligacy in reference to taking his brother Philip's wife. This plain and faithful dealing subjected him to imprisonment, where he

remained until Herod's birthday, when he was beheaded to please Herodias. The particulars of this abominable transaction are recorded by the evangelist Matthew (ch. xiv. 1-13). The work of John was done; he sealed the doctrines which he taught with his blood; and Christ had entered on his ministerial work. (Mark i. 14.)





CHAPTER XXX.

Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Jesus Christ—He commences to preach the Gospel—He furnishes evidence of his claims as to his Messiahship—Divine prophecy concerning him—He is rejected by the Jews—Reasons why they rejected him, negative and positive—The crucifixion of Christ—Peter preaches Christ as a Saviour to the Jewish council—Many Jews embrace Christianity, but still as a body they reject it.

IN this chapter we purpose to describe the character of Christ, as set forth in his public teaching, and the manner of his holy life, in such a way as to show the reasons why the Jews would not acknowledge him to be the promised Messiah. In furnishing a historical sketch of the Jewish nation, in the Saviour's time, this appears to be necessary; and equally necessary in relation to what subsequently occurred, their final ruin being attributable to their rejecting the Saviour. This, we are aware, is open to disputation, but as believers in God's word we cannot safely come to any other conclusion. We may be told that long ere the coming of Christ, inspired prediction fixed or fore-

told the awful destiny of the Jewish nation. True, but God foreseeing they would reject Christ as their only Saviour, caused those predictions to be thus uttered and recorded as an everlasting warning to the whole human race. In this light the subject is viewed by St. Paul in his epistle to the Romans.

The miraculous birth and infantine life of the Saviour we have already noticed in connection with the last acts of Herod the Great, and as there is but little recorded of his early history in relation to public life, we shall commence with his ministry, on which he entered when he was about thirty years of age ; immediately after, or just before John the Baptist was cast into prison by Herod Antipas. "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, saying, The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand : repent ye and believe the gospel." Mark i. 14. In the divine mind the grand and glorious scheme of human redemption was delineated before the foundation of the world, and every particular of this plan was brought forth at the time specified in the divine council : "In the fulness of time God sent forth his son," &c. At the proper time the "voice of one crying in the wilderness" was heard preaching the doctrine of repentance, and "preparing the way of the Lord," proclaiming the coming of him "*who is above all*"; "The King of kings and Lord of lords." But that harbinger's voice is no longer heard in the wilderness. Herod the king has incarcerated John within the massy walls of the state prison ; but he had done

his work, "The time was fulfilled," and the king himself appears on the field of action. His first encounter was with Satan the prince of hell, who being defeated in his presumptuous attempt, stirred up princes and priests, councils and synods, to oppose him. We cannot however here enter into the particulars of the Saviour's life, but shall observe—

I. Christ professed to be the promised Messiah, the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world, and he furnished clear and indubitable evidence in justification of these high and divine claims. In fact the predictions recorded by the ancient Jewish prophets, in relation to the true Messiah, are so particular in reference to time and place and the various circumstances associated therewith, that they could be fulfilled by none but Christ. No other person in the world, who has ever lived, or who may live hereafter, could, in all particulars, demonstrate a fulfilment of the numerous and various prophecies which point out the character, life and death of the true Messiah. According to inspired prophecy, some of the impostors came too soon and others too late. How thick must be the veil which still hangs over the minds of the Jews, and prevents them from seeing that the time for the appearing of the Messiah, according to their own acknowledged prophets, has long since past. Christ must be of the family of David, must be born of a virgin, in Bethlehem of Judea, must go into Egypt, or he could not be "called out of Egypt." A messenger must go before him, as did John the Baptist, sustaining all the parti-

cular characteristics of a harbinger, as set forth in the person, character, and conduct of that distinguished personage. He must come before the destruction of the second temple, for it was foretold that he should suddenly come to it, and teach in it: and this second temple has been shown to be identical with the one rebuilt by Herod, and destroyed by the Romans. He must open his mission in Judea, and lay the foundation of his church in Jerusalem, because from this place the gospel was to be diffused all over the world. He must be despised and rejected by his own countrymen; for God, foreseeing he would thus be treated, it was thus foretold, and the Jews must be punished for their infidelity, and other wicked conduct toward him. He must enlighten and adopt effectual measures for the conversion of the Gentiles. This is particularly pointed out as the work of the true Messiah and his disciples. And as the great antitype of the Jewish sacrifices, he must abolish the daily sacrifices and rites of the ceremonial law. Now all these particulars could not possibly meet with their accomplishment in any other person.

Should it be said that a son may yet be born in Bethlehem of a virgin, and before him may be raised up a forerunner like unto John the Baptist, still we see the time is past in which Messiah was to make his appearance. The sceptre has most certainly long since departed from Judah and the Jewish people. The temple in which Messiah was to teach has long since totally disappeared. Eighteen hundred years ago it was finally demolished, and the ruined metropolis of the Hebrew

nation is possessed by strangers, and trodden under foot by the Gentiles. Since Christ died the sacrifice and oblations have ceased. These facts neither Jews nor infidels can deny, unless they choose to utter deliberate falsehoods. It is therefore clear, without argumentation, that Jesus Christ is the true Messiah spoken of in the ancient Jewish Scriptures; for none could answer to his character before Christ, and none could furnish proof answerable to his requirements since the time of Christ. He must therefore be "The Christ the Son of God," and the Saviour of the world.

We must further remark that Christ fully established his claims to being the Messiah and the Saviour of the world by the numerous miracles which he wrought, partly in justification of his claims, and partly in proof of his boundless mercy and infinite love. For his miracles were not merely manifestations of his Almighty power, but rich displays of matchless grace, in which were unfolded the essential perfections of his Godhead, and the noblest and most refined feelings of his moral nature as a man. Showing at once, as a man, there were none to be compared with him, and as the only Son of God he possessed the natural and moral perfections of Deity, performing miraculous works, same as the Father, and declaring and making it manifest that he had "*life in himself*," and therefore had power to quicken and raise the dead. These, however, are subjects on which we cannot dwell. They belong to Christian history and the theology of the New Testament.

Let us now inquire into the reason why the Jews rejected and crucified Christ, as this forms an important tragedy in connection with the last scenes of Jewish history, before the destruction of their nationality.

1. They did not reject him because his doctrinal and practical teachings were impure or unworthy the dignity of his office, or the character which he sustained. The moral precepts laid down and inculcated by Christ are the purest, the noblest, and the most sublime ever offered to the consideration of man, and evidently derive their origin from the fountain of infinite purity and eternal truth. The fundamental principle which pervades the whole is supreme love to God, and universal and disinterested love to man. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." This love is the foundation and the essence of Christianity, regarded either as a moral system or as a matter of experience; and for this reason Christ proclaimed the necessity of a new birth, or the renewal of our whole moral nature. We must be born of God and made holy; for without this radical change there can be nothing in man that is truly good. "The carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be." We see then that the doctrines taught by Christ were singularly holy, just, and good; in all respects worthy of God, and consistent with the dictates of enlightened reason. If we compare his religious teaching, as set forth by the four inspired evangelists, with that contained in any human system, in any nation, either ancient or modern, we shall at once see the truthfulness of this important declara-

tion, "He spoke as never man spoke." The purity and spirituality of his teaching far transcends anything on record either amongst the heathen moralists or rabbinical Jews. He possessed "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and the fear of the Lord." He was the prophet foretold by Moses, whom they were commanded to hear and obey in all things: "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever he shall say unto you, and it shall come to pass that every soul which will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people." Acts iii. 22, 23. Every word spoken by Christ is a living infallible oracle from God himself, and must be received on pain of the eternal displeasure of the Almighty. The Jews nevertheless run the venture, and refused to hear him. Why?

2. Not because they discovered the marks of an impostor in his life. It is possible for a man to teach sound doctrine and righteous morals without giving practical proof of his sincerity. But Christ did not, like many false prophets, disgrace himself, and render his character suspected by teaching one thing, and doing another. There was a marked consistency and a beautiful uniformity between his doctrine and precepts which he taught and the manner of his life, so that none could justly charge him with hypocrisy. He taught obedience to the law of Moses, and he honoured that law by his holy living. He could appeal to his enemies,

the Jews, who regarded the law as the standard of moral rectitude, and say, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" He fulfilled all righteousness in a manner, in which no mere human being could do. He magnified the law and made it honourable by actually doing its commands to the uttermost. It is true that he was accused by his enemies of sin, of intemperance, disloyalty, and even of blasphemy; but the fallacy of these allegations being so palpable, they are at once manifest to every reader of the sacred records, and every impartial judge must concur with Pilate, who said, "I have examined him, but I find no fault in him." He was perfectly holy, harmless, and undefiled, separate from sinners, "A Lamb without spot and blameless." Those who lived in his day failed to convict him of sin, and modernsceptics have been equally unsuccessful in their impious attempts to damage his moral reputation. They have had recourse to every kind of argument and craft, in order, if possible, to tarnish his character, but he stands, and will stand for ever, on the pages of evangelical history without the shadow of a spot, as an everlasting monument of moral purity and perfection. The wisest and most virtuous of human beings have had their failings, which have shown them to be but men. This was the case with Abraham, Moses, Job, and David, the most distinguished worthies of the Old Testament; with Peter, James, and John, the intimate friends of Christ, who could not watch one hour at the time when their Divine Master appeared to be in the greatest danger, and whose soul was trenched in the deepest

sufferings; and the most extolled and virtuous christian philosophers of all nations have also had their failings; but Christ stands alone in these respects free from sin or moral fault. With regard to the sublimity of the doctrines which he taught, and the practices which he inculcated, he was superior to all other men, while the purity of his manners and the perfection of his virtues, are without any rival. Then why did the Jews refuse to acknowledge him?

3. Certainly not because he failed to establish his claims through inability to confirm his mission by the performance of miracles. Any person who professes to be divinely commissioned to establish a new religious constitution, not found in the records of divine revelation, is expected to confirm his mission by the manifestation of some miraculous power. This is so generally acknowledged, and so universally believed, that men naturally look for it, and the inventors of false systems generally try to make their votaries believe that they are invested with a miraculous power, and with their impious pretensions deceive the weak and credulous. Now Christ came, not to form a new religion, so as to set aside the moral law and love to God and mankind, but to more fully reveal the will of God, to do the will of God, and finally make an atonement for the sins of the world. Hence what Christ said and did in his life and death and resurrection furnish materials for a new religious constitution, which is Christianity; and in this sense Christianity is a new religion compared with the Jewish religious constitution, and as such it is regarded by the inspired apostles. On this subject St. Paul elabo-

rates to a considerable extent. Now as the work of Christ was to accomplish this great religious change, beginning in Judea, where the people had a divine institution, it was necessary he should furnish them with evidence of his divine authority. Hence Moses said, the prophet whom they must obey in all things should be like unto himself, of course not in all particulars, but so as to furnish them with evidence that he was sent of God. Now we all know that Moses distinguished himself, and proved that his commission was divine by the numerous miracles which he performed; and in this particular feature Christ was like unto Moses. The miracles of Christ were numerous, and of such a character as were sufficient alone to prove his divinity and to justify his claims to being the promised Messiah. He performed them at his will. At his supreme command the raging elements of nature were hushed into silence, the dead obeyed his Almighty voice, and legions of devils fled at his presence. Christ himself, when speaking of the incredulity of the Jews, said, "The works which I do testify of me. If I had not done among them works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my father; they have hated me without a cause." Moses did many miracles in Egypt, at the Red Sea, on Horeb, and at Kadesh-Barnea. Joshua wrought miracles at the Jordan, at Jericho, and when engaged in battle with the Gibeonites; Elijah and Elisha wrought many miracles in the land of Israel; but it must be borne in mind that they were only human

agents. The miraculous power which distinguished their actions, or enabled them to discern the thoughts of the human heart, were divine gifts bestowed upon them for the occasions ; but Christ wrought his miracles by his own Almighty power, and perfect prescience, "Whatsoever the Father doeth, the Son doeth also." The apostles did many miracles, but the miraculous power did not constantly abide with them. It was occasionally bestowed upon them for the accomplishment of certain purposes ; but the power of Christ was uniformly the same, though not continually manifested. At any time he had only to speak, or will, and all must submit to his pleasure and mandate ; for he had all power in heaven and on earth. The miracles of Christ did convince many of the learned and more thoughtful Jews that he was "a teacher come from God" (John iii. 1), but still they refused to acknowledge him as their Saviour. And for why ?

4. There was nothing offensive or improper in his general manners of life, or in the method of his teaching, that could lead them to reject him. The gentleness and propriety of his manners were not less impressive than the wisdom of his discourses, and the spotless purity of his life. In the general tone of his teaching there was a peculiar grandeur and beauty, mingled with commanding authority and engaging simplicity. He addressed his hearers, whether in private or in public, in vast numbers, or in congregations more select, in the presence of either friends or foes, in a style at once calculated to command their respectful attention, with-

out giving any offence to the most refined taste or delicate feelings. He was occasionally severe, and personally pointed when reproving hypocritical professors for their detestable crimes, but never pompous, swelling, or ostentatious, which are the offspring of affected superiority and offensive efforts to sustain a character which is not genuine. These are methods resorted to by impostors, or men of inferior minds, who substitute sound for sense, and bluster for power. When Christ spoke of his own matchless greatness and incomparable glory, which he had frequent occasion to do, viz., of his oneness with the Father, his pre-existence, his power to save, his judging the world, his power to bestow the blessings of everlasting life on all who should believe on him, and of the glory which awaited him in heaven, he made no parade of them, used no high sounding or inflated language. He speaks of these great and wonderful things with as much calmness, confidence, and simplicity as we should converse on the common affairs of life. And as to his general manners, they were all simple, easy, and interesting. There was nothing in his habits, general conduct, or style of teaching which could possibly lead men to suppose he was endeavouring to sustain an unreal character. Then why, again we may inquire, did they reject him? as he fully answered in his nativity, in his genealogy, in his general character and conduct, in the doctrines and practices which he taught, in his numerous miracles, and in everything else to the predicted Messiah. In reply, we may venture to say,—

1. Because he did not answer to their ideas and expectations in reference to the re-establishment of their civil government and secular monarchy. The Jews cherished an idea that when Messiah came he would rescue them from the oppressive tributes inflicted upon them by their late Idumean governor, who had brought them in bondage to the Roman senate. After the death of Herod the Great, the Romans appointed over them oppressive and tyrannical governors, who completely annihilated their national independency. They believed that when Messiah came he would deliver them from this bondage, and make them masters of the world by the establishment of a universal empire, to which they attached the idea of the theocracy, which in former days dignified and elevated their nation; and thus as a peculiar people, compact and mighty in power, they should exist under the special approbation and protection of Jehovah. In this their hopes were blasted, and their expectations cut off. Christ, when he opened his mission, gave not the slightest intimations of establishing an earthly kingdom, or freeing the Jews from the Roman yoke. He uttered not a word about conquest over their enemies, and the glory of an earthly monarchy to which he intended to raise them; on the contrary, he said, "My kingdom is not of this world;" and "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And he further describes who shall be the subjects of this heavenly kingdom; showing that it is not to be restricted to the posterity of Abraham, but that it shall be inherited by all who are the subjects of saving grace, "Blessed are the

poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven." "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven." Not the boasted righteousness of the vaunting pharisees, "For except your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven." He moreover informed them that the gates of this kingdom would be open to none but the pure in heart, regardless of all national distinction: "I say unto you that many shall come from the east, and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out, into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." "Here all the hopes which the Jews had cherished of an exclusive and peculiar possession of Messiah's kingdom were crushed; and the reception of the despised gentile world to all its blessings, or in other words, the extension of his pure religion to the ends of the earth, began to be proclaimed." He was not the king of the Jews exclusively, but "the King of Saints." His dominion is an empire of grace and future glory in the heavenly world, where in his glorified humanity he will for ever reign over the redeemed millions, whose salvation he hath purchased with his own blood. The angel that appeared to the Virgin Mary, the mother of our Lord, said, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto

him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Luke i. 32, 33.

2. They were not only disappointed in reference to the nature of his kingdom, but they were offended because he overlooked their supposed national superiority and placed them on a level, in reference to spiritual privileges, with all other nations. For many ages they had been a people of God's peculiar care. This their history abundantly and clearly shows; but their incessant rebellions had provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger, and at the time when Christ made his appearance they were perhaps the most guilty nation under heaven. Not that they were more grossly wicked than the surrounding heathen nations, for this could not be, but, considering the light which God had given them and the many manifestations of his immutable love towards them, they were less excusable, and consequently more guilty than they. To this awful subject Christ frequently drew their attention in his public discourses, informing them at the same time that having thus abused God's mercy they should no longer be regarded as his peculiar people, and that in the dispensation of grace all nations, kindred, and people, were included without any distinction. This insulted their national pride, and they hated Christ because he told them the truth.

3. Moreover, his doctrine did not suit the Sadducees, and his general teaching and pointed method of reproofing hypocritical professors offended the Pharisees. The

Sadducees were an influential and numerous sect, who had by degrees degenerated into infidelity respecting some of the most important doctrines taught in the Bible. They disbelieved in the existence of angels and spirits, and consequently in the immortality of the soul and future rewards and punishments; and as these doctrines occupied a very prominent place in the teaching and ministrations of Christ, they rejected him. The Pharisees were more sound and scriptural in doctrine, but their empty profession, their pride and affected superiority, were abominable. On these two sects especially Christ poured out the thunder of his holy indignation, and pronounced upon them divers woes and unmeasured condemnation. Threats, expressed in such pointed and alarming language, is scarcely to be found anywhere else in the Bible. He designates them “a wicked and adulterous generation, blind guides, hypocrites, oppressors, devourers of widows’ houses, and for a pretence making long prayers.” Therefore, he says, “they shall receive the greater damnation.” He calls them children of hell, fools, a generation of vipers who cannot escape the damnation of hell, murderers who have killed the prophets; yea, he describes them as being given up to be as wicked as their fathers, forsaken of God, and doomed, with their nation and temple, to utter temporal ruin. And these awful denunciations Christ delivered in his last *public* discourse to that apostate and hypocritical sect; therefore no wonder that they took the most active part in crucifying him. They were given up to judicial blindness and

obduracy of mind. The devil had taken possession of their hearts, and influenced their thoughts and actions. Priests and people, rulers and their subjects, were left to fill up the measure of their iniquities, to be as wicked as their fathers, who killed the prophets before the Babylonish captivity. They were given up to follow the devices of Satan, under whose influence they were. Therefore, infuriated by infernal delusion, and excited to madness and cruelty, they crucified the Prince of Life and Glory. They not only rejected him, but put him to the most cruel and shameful death. He died upon the cross. But in his mortal agony, when taking the last look at his murderers, just before his languid eyes closed in death, he pitied his enemies, and with his expiring breath he prayed for them—"Father, forgive them."

"The Father hears his pleading Son and lays his vengeance bye."

The insulted majesty of heaven forbears to inflict immediate punishment. The light of the sun is veiled, but the wicked throng are not blasted in eternal night. The rocks are rent, but the murderers are not swallowed up, like those who rebelled against Moses in the wilderness. The hand of justice is uplifted, but the suffering Redeemer consents to receive the dreadful blow. "Father forgive them." The Father says, I will forgive them if they only repent and believe, though they have put my only well-beloved Son to the most cruel and scandalous death. This is not mere imagination; for, after the resurrection of Christ, divine pardon was

offered by St. Peter to the Jews who crucified him :
“ The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus ; whom ye have delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One, and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you ; and killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof ye are witnesses. And now, brethren, I wot through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things which God before hath shewed by the mouth of his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.” Acts iii. 13-26.

We see, then, that under the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, though the Jews were “ cut off ” for their rejection of the Saviour, pardon was offered to all who truly repented and turned to God by faith in Christ. The apostle’s discourse throughout was admirably suited to his auditory, and is a striking manifestation of God’s long-suffering and willingness to pardon even the very persons who had murdered his Son. And we cannot but look upon this willingness of God the Father to

pardon the Jews as an answer to the prayer of Christ, which he uttered on the cross, "Father, forgive them."

It is very pleasing to find that St. Peter's preaching was not in vain: "Many of them that heard the word believed; and the number of the men were about five thousand." The rulers, elders, scribes, and priests, generally opposed the apostles and put them in prison, but the word was not bound, many received the truth with gladness and were converted to the faith of the Gospel. These were saved from the coming wrath and the fearful consequence of rejecting their only Saviour. As the majority of the Jewish people, together with their priests and rulers, continued to disbelieve in Christ and oppose christianity, they were devoted to destruction. And they remain to this day, though under God's providential government, living monuments of his displeasure, and will so remain until they receive christianity and embrace Christ as their saviour. Through unbelief they were cut off, and by faith they will be grafted in again. For the Jews shall be brought in with the fulness of the Gentiles. And it appears from what the apostle says, (Rom. xi. 25.) that the blindness which happened unto Israel will not be taken away, "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." By which we are to understand that the gentile nations generally, if not universally, shall be converted to christianity before the Jews will embrace it. The more general spread and reception of gospel truth among the various Mohammedan and heathen nations of the earth will lead, it is probable, the Jews to a more careful and

candid investigation of the valid claims and proofs of the christian system, by which means they will be led to acknowledge and embrace it. They maliciously and wilfully rejected Christ, and continue so to do, and for that crime, by the justice of God, they are locked up in unbelief, "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." Well might the apostle exclaim, when contemplating this subject, in which is unfolded the wonderful dispensations of God's mercy and justice, in relation to both Jews and Gentiles, but at the same time a subject which we can never fully understand in this life, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out; for who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever, Amen." Romans xi. 33-36.



CHAPTER XXXI.

The Various Roman Governors of Judea.



Pilate and Herod Antipas—The Jews persecuted by the Greeks and Macedonians—Herod Agrippa, his vicissitudes and death—Reflections on his character and incidents of his reign—Herod Agrippa, the younger, last prince of the Herodian dynasty—Judea completely reduced to a Roman province—Governed by Fadus, Felix, Festus, Albinus, Gessius, and Florus, successive governors of Judea—Sedition and rebellion break out—The dreadful condition of Jerusalem—The tumult at Casarea—Nero appealed to—The tyrannical conduct of Florus—Agrippa and Bernice interpose on behalf of the Jews—Open rebellion—Florus obliged to flee from Jerusalem to Casarea—The dominions of Agrippa—The Apostle Paul before Agrippa—Agrippa visits Jerusalem—Delivers to the Jews an important and suitable address—The Jews exclude him out of the city and pelt him with stones—The war with Rome commences—The army of Agrippa sent to put down the rebellion—Ananias, the high priest, the person reproved by St. Paul—A remarkable coincident.



IN the preceding chapter we noticed some important particulars in relation to Christ, and it would now afford us pleasure to record the grand and important events developed in connection with the rise and progress of Christianity, as seen in the labours of the first missionaries of the cross; but this

work belongs to christian history, which is not comprehended in the design of this production; we therefore return, though somewhat reluctantly, to the history of the Jews.

At the time Christ was crucified, as we have before noticed, Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod Antipas was tetrarch of Galilee. These two governors, soon after the death of the Saviour, were called to their final account. Herod died an exile in Spain, and Pilate, after insulting and oppressing the Jews in various ways, and thereby causing tumults and insurrections, was commanded by the emperor to appear in Rome to give an account of his conduct. Tiberius, the emperor, died before his arrival; but Eusebius says, "Pilate fell into such great trouble, under the emperor Caligula, that in despair he committed suicide;" while Tillemont states that he died in banishment at Vienne in Dauphing. Under the reign of Caligula Judea remained attached to the Syrian province, and was subject to various insults from the Syro-Grecians respecting their religion; and as the Romans generally were more favourable to the Greeks, the Jews regarded themselves as oppressed and persecuted. Also about this time the Alexandrine Jews were subjected to dreadful persecution by the Macedonians, who inhabited a part of Alexandria. These heathens, under the encouragement of Flaccus, the governor, entered the Jewish Synagogues and polluted them by erecting heathen statues. They moreover plundered the dwelling-houses of the Jews, and put many of them to death. The Roman emperor

also gave orders that his statue should be erected in the temple at Jerusalem, that he might, through that, receive religious homage as their god, as well as the civil homage of the nation as their king; and he gave command accordingly to Petronius, the Syrian governor. The Roman general delayed in the execution of this command, during which time, as a favour shown to Agrippa, the mandate was countermanded by the emperor.

Agrippa was the grandson of Herod the Great, his father being Aristobulus, the son of Mariamne, the Maccabean. This prince married Bernice, the daughter of Salome, Herod's sister. He was educated in Rome under the care of his mother, where he formed an early friendship with Drusus, the son of Tiberius. As he grew up he was admitted into the imperial court, and indulged in habits of expense beyond his limited income; upon his mother's death he soon squandered away his wealth, which was not very large. When his princely friend Drusus died he lost all hopes of advancement at Rome, and returned to Judea, where he married Cypros, the daughter of Phasael, said to be a woman of superior conduct and accomplishments. He remained in Judea for a time, and then returned to Rome, once more to try his fortune in the imperial city. Arriving at Rome he was kindly acknowledged by the emperor, and became a companion of Caligula, to whom he unguardedly expressed a hope that he would ascend the throne. This being communicated to Tiberius, Agrippa was put into prison, where he remained until the death of the

emperor, when he was released by Caligula, and in a few days after was made tetrarch of Philippi and Lysanias, with the title of king. He was also presented with a golden chain, equal in weight to the fetters in which he had been bound by Tiberius. After taking possession of his territory, he again returned to Rome, on which occasion he was peculiarly honoured by Caligula. When this emperor was assassinated, Agrippa took a prominent part in the counsels of the senate, and Claudius, who succeeded the unfortunate Caligula, was so pleased with the conduct and ability of the Jewish prince, that he conferred upon him, in addition to the territories granted by Caligula, the sovereignty of Judea and Samaria, with other districts, which altogether formed a kingdom equal in magnitude to that possessed by his grandfather, Herod the Great.

But his regal glory was of short duration ; something like a blazing meteor, which glitters only for a short time and then suddenly disappears. Agrippa, inflated with the idea of his sovereign greatness, and wishing to dazzle the eyes of his subjects with his imperial splendour, arrayed himself in the most gorgeous attire to appear before them. Clothed in a panoply of glittering silver, he went to the place of public assembly, where he made a splendid oration, in a style which so pleased and charmed the multitude of his deluded admirers that they blasphemously exclaimed, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man." The infatuated king received the ridiculous and impious applause without correcting the enthusiasm and folly of the people, whereupon he

was instantly smitten by an angel with death, was eaten of worms and gave up the ghost. This fact is recorded both by sacred and profane historians. What a striking proof of the declaration made by the Psalmist, "Man in his best estate is altogether vanity." Agrippa reigned seven years, during which period his conduct generally gave great satisfaction to the Jews, and by his policy he kept in favour with both Caligula and Claudius, who added various provinces to his dominion, and thereby he was constituted one of the most distinguished potentates of the oriental nations that flourished in his time. His power and influence were so great at one time, that five of the eastern kings came to Tiberias to pay him courtly homage, and yet it must be observed, that he had no independent authority. He was only a king in title, the sceptre had really departed from Judah; as a proof of this, while the five potentates were paying their respects, a haughty delegate of Claudius arrived, and sternly commanded them to leave the court of Agrippa and return to their respective provinces; such was the power and authority of Rome, and the vassalage of these petty princes.

We must here remark that, while Agrippa studied to give satisfaction to the Jews, in some cases, he did it at the expense of persecuting and illtreating the unoffending Christians. After the descent of the Holy Ghost christianity spread with amazing rapidity, both in Judea and the neighbouring provinces of the Roman Empire; and Agrippa, well-knowing that professed Christians were detested by the Jews generally, at-

tempted to arrest their increase, and if possible to destroy christianity by violent persecution. This was the same Herod who imprisoned Peter and murdered James the Just. The latter crime was so dreadful in the opinion of Josephus, that it was the principal cause of the destruction of Jerusalem. Herod Agrippa was a man of great talent and ability, he inherited much of his grandfather's genius and mental qualities, which may be seen in the career of his political and civil life. He was more firm and sincere in his attachment to Judaism than his illustrious ancestor, having in his veins a flow of the Maccabean blood, but he had no sympathy with Christians. He impiously strove to arrest the progress of the Gospel by vilely persecuting the holy apostles, whose exalted piety, consistent conduct, and mighty miracles ought to have taught him better. Agrippa died in the 54th year of his age, leaving a son of the same name, and three daughters Bernice, Mariamne, and Drusilla.

This young Agrippa was the last of the Herodian family, any way distinguished in history. At the time his father died he was very young, nevertheless Claudius would have placed him upon the throne, in the place of his father, had he not been dissuaded to the contrary by his friends and counsellors, who thought the royal prince too young to be trusted with the affairs of government. The emperor yielded to their reasoning and again reduced the kingdom of Judea to a Roman province, and appointed Fadus the governor, restricting his authority with regard to the nomination of the

high priest, the government of the temple, and the appropriation of the sacred treasurers. In other words, Fadus was intrusted with the affairs pertaining to the civil government, but restrained from having any control over the ecclesiastical affairs of the temple: these privileges were transferred to the late Herod's brother, king of Chaleis. After his death the young Agrippa was appointed by Nero in his place, who also added other territories to his dominions.

Though Judea was designated a kingdom, under the government of Herod Agrippa, and a province under the administration of Fadus the Procurator; in both conditions it was under the supreme control of Cæsar, who in all cases of dispute governed it by the acknowledged right of his imperial arbitration and decisive mandates. After a few years of mismanagement under the government of Fadus, and his successors in office, Cumanus, Felix, Festus, Albinus, and Gessius Florus, dissatisfaction prevailed, and at length open rebellion broke out.

It was during this period that Judea was visited with a dreadful famine, which gave rise to plunder, robbery, and the shedding of blood. Also several impostors, taking advantage of the distressed condition of the nation, and the dissatisfaction which existed in the public mind, rose up, and led their followers on to sedition and rebellion, in which we discern the preludes of the impending wars, and the destruction of the Jewish nation. It is only just to say that the misgovernment of the Roman procurators was not the only evil which

gave rise to those outbreaks of rebellion. The greatest evils were inflicted by the general demoralization of society, the entire absence of justice, and the overbearing oppression and tyranny of the higher orders of society. The character of the Roman rulers, and the condition of the Jewish people, may be seen in the following quotation, taken from Josephus, (Wars b. ii. c. xiv.) Speaking of Festus, who succeeded Felix, he says, "He made it his business to correct those evils that made disturbance in the country ; so he caught the greater part of the robbers and destroyed a great many of them." This indicates the mismanagement of Felix, and the disordered state of society, when Festus took the procuratorship. "But then Albinus, who succeeded Festus, did not execute his office as the other had done, nor was there any sort of wickedness that could be named but he had a hand in it. Accordingly, he did not only in his political capacity steal and plunder every man's substance, nor did he only burden the whole nation with taxes, but he permitted the relations of such as were in prison for robbery, and had lain there, either by the order of the senate, or by the former procurators, to redeem them for money ; and nobody remained in the prisons as malefactors, but he who gave him nothing." "Hence the poor were punished, and the rich escaped punishment. It was at this time that the enterprises of the sedition at Jerusalem were very formidable, the principal men among them purchased leave of Albinus to go on with their seditious practices, while that part of the people who delighted in disturbance joined them-

selves to such as had fellowship with Albinus ; and every one of these wicked wretches was encompassed with his band of robbers, or a tyrant made a figure among the company, and abused his authority over those about him, in order to plunder those who lived quietly. The effect of which was this, that those who lost their goods were forced to hold their peace, when they had reason to show great indignation at what they had suffered, but those who had escaped were forced to flatter him that deserved to be punished, out of the fear they were suffering equally with the others. Upon the whole, nobody durst speak their minds, for tyranny was generally tolerated ; and at this time were those seeds sown which brought the city to destruction."

From the above description of their civil and social condition we might suppose it could not, under any administration or form of government, be much worse. It presents a condition little better than lawless. But the historian goes on to say, " And though such was the character of Albinus, yet did Gessius Florus, who succeeded him, demonstrate him to have been a most excellent person, upon the comparison ; for the former did the greatest part of his rogueries in private, and with a sort of dissimulation, but Gessius did his unjust actions to the harm of the nation after a pompous manner, and as though he had been sent as an executioner to punish condemned malefactors. He omitted no sort of rapine or of vexation ; where the cases were really pitiable he was most barbarous ; and in all things of the greatest turpitude he was most impu-

dent; nor could anyone outdo him in disguising the truth, nor could anyone contrive more subtle ways of deceit than he did. He indeed thought it but a petty offence to get money out of a single person, so he spoiled whole cities and ruined entire bodies of men at once, and did almost publicly proclaim it all the country over that they had liberty given them to turn robbers, upon the condition that he might go shares with them in the spoils. Many of the people left the country and fled into foreign provinces." Such was the condition of Jerusalem and the surrounding country in the year 66 A.D., when Cestius Gallus, the governor of Syria, visited Jerusalem at the time of the Passover. A number of the Jews waited upon him for the purpose of making him acquainted with the tyranny of Florus, and most earnestly besought him to interfere on their behalf and afford them some protection. He made some fair promises, merely to secure temporary tranquillity, but this was all. When he returned to Antioch he was accompanied by Florus, who very likely feared an outbreak and felt himself safest out of the way.

In this year, owing to the above and other circumstances, the war commenced, which was followed by a series of campaigns and sieges such as the world never before witnessed, nor perhaps ever will do to the end of time; and these sanguinary conflicts terminated not only with the destruction of Jerusalem, but in the entire ruin of the whole nation. We cannot enter into all the particular details of this dark and terrible

section of Jewish history, but shall endeavour to take as clear and comprehensive a view of the principal operations of this awful warfare as possible.

Josephus dates the commencement of this war from the tumults which took place at Cæsarea, in the month of May, 66 A.D., being the twelfth year of the reign of Nero, and in the seventeenth year of the reign of Agrippa; consequently this prince would be about thirty-eight years of age. The reader will remember this was the son of Herod Agrippa, who was so suddenly cut off in the midst of his regal pomp and glory. The above-mentioned disturbances seemed to originate with the Jews claiming a right to Cæsarea, under the pretext of Herod the Great being its founder, while the Syrian Greeks asserted it belonged to them, and that it had always been a pagan city, in confirmation of which they referred to the statues and temples erected by Herod, which were not Jewish, but pagan. It will therefore be seen that the duplicity and insincerity of that equivocal monarch laid the foundation of this bloody dispute; for, while Herod professed to be a Jew, as we have before remarked, in order to please the Greeks and Romans he gave every countenance and support to paganism, and especially so in the rebuilding of Cæsarea. An appeal was sent to Nero to decide this dispute, and he decreed in favour of the Greeks. This produced a general insurrection, in which the inhabitants of Jerusalem participated. In connection with this affair Florus, the governor, acted a very dishonourable part; for after obtaining a fee of eight talents from the Jews, under a

promise to protect them, he refused to either return them their money or afford them any assistance. He moreover attempted to take seventeen talents from the sacred treasury, under a pretext that it was required for the service of Cæsar. This the Jews firmly resisted, and offered him public insult, by carrying a bag about the city and ironically pretending to solicit alms for their poor distressed governor. For this insult the enraged governor brought out his forces and demanded satisfaction. He ordered his soldiers to plunder the market-place, and put to death all who resisted them. The soldiers obeyed his commands, and then plundered the whole city. About 3,600, including both sexes and of various ages, perished on the occasion. We are informed that on this occasion Florus violated all the laws and privileges of Rome itself, by scourging and crucifying some of the Jews who had been admitted to the Roman order of knights.

Both the chief Jews and Bernice, sister of Agrippa, entreated Florus to appease his anger, and refrain from violence, but all to no purpose. On the other hand, the priests feeling alarmed at the prospect of a general rebellion, endeavoured to persuade the people to submission, but their feelings were too much excited to be repressed. The infuriated populace supposing Florus intended to plunder the temple, as a preventive broke down the porticoes which connected it with the castle of Antonia; thus the whole city, palace, and temple were all in disorder and great danger. Florus in the midst of this disturbance fled to Cæsarea, leaving the priests and

military force to restore peace. Information respecting the disordered state of Jerusalem was communicated to Cestius, the Syrian governor, who instantly dispatched one of his generals to Agrippa, with a request for him to go to Jerusalem, and use his influence to stop the rebellion. We may just observe that Agrippa was king of Trachonitis, a region which lay on the north of Palestine, on the east side of the Jordan, and south of Damascus, his dominion also comprehended Bastanea, Gaulonitis, Lysanias, and two cities in Galilee, viz., Tiberias and Tarichea, also Abila and Julias in Perœa. He was therefore a person of influence and importance. He was moreover strongly attached to the Romans, who had so highly promoted him; at the same time he was well affected towards the Jews. This was the Agrippa whom St. Paul so highly complimented in the exordium of that eloquent address, which he delivered in his own defence, recorded in Acts xxvi., "I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself before thee, as touching all things whereof I am accused of the Jews, especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews; whereof I beseech thee to hear me patiently." From this it appears that Agrippa was a man of reputed intelligence, and well acquainted with the laws and customs of the Jews, and of his country generally. He was therefore a very proper person to be employed on this occasion. Those who suppose the apostle thus addressed Agrippa merely to flatter his pride, are mistaken, for Agrippa was certainly a man of superior attainments

and extensive information on both civil and religious matters, as his address to the Jews, when they were about to take up arms against the Romans, clearly shows.

Agrippa having arrived at Jerusalem, in company with Neopolitances, the Syrian delegate, were both received with marks of respect; but at the same time many whose relatives had been murdered, complained of the manner in which they had been treated by Florus, and intimated that unless their grievances were redressed they would take up arms against the Romans and defend their national rights and privileges whatever might be the consequence. This placed Agrippa in a very critical position. He had a duty to perform on behalf of the Romans, to whom he was under a great obligation, and at the same time he had a sincere respect for the Jews, whom he knew had been oppressed and cruelly treated by the Roman officers; he also most clearly foresaw, that if the Jews persisted in their determination the nation would be overborne and ruined by the superior power of the emperor's military force, and the vast resources which he had at his command to support a protracted warfare; and he expressed himself accordingly.

In the first place he clearly demonstrated, by logical and conclusive argumentation, the folly of the Jews going to war with the Romans under any pretence whatever, as there was no reasonable prospect of their success; he therefore strongly urged on them the propriety of submission. This address is recorded at full length by Josephus (*Wars* b. ii. c. xvi.)

When Agrippa had finished his speech, both he and his sister Bernice, who was present on the occasion, were affected even to tears, and the violence of the people seemed greatly repressed ; but still they declared their vengeance against Florus, on account of what they had suffered through his wicked and cruel conduct towards them, to which the king replied that what they had already done was like making war against Rome ; for he said, “ You have not paid the tribute which is due to Cæsar, and you have cut off the cloisters of the temple from joining the tower of Antonia.” He then urged them to repair the injury they had just done and to pay the tribute due to Cæsar. This they complied with. Agrippa then ventured to persuade them to obey Florus until such time as Cæsar sent another governor in his place. At this they were so enraged against Agrippa that they got him excluded out of the city, and some of them even pelted him with stones ; supposing, we may presume, that this was his main object, and that he was in reality the friend of their enemy and tyrant. Agrippa left the city in disgust and anger, and afterwards he united his troops with the Romans, and assisted at the siege of Jerusalem. Agrippa survived the ruin of his country, and, according to Tacitus, died in the year 94 A.D.

On Agrippa leaving Jerusalem the war actually commenced, which never stopped till the city was taken by Titus and destroyed, which took place about four years afterwards.

The Jews first made an assault upon the Roman gar-

rison, and took possession of the fortress of Masada. This stronghold, of which we have many wonderful accounts, was held by the Jews until after Jerusalem was destroyed, and was the last citadel which yielded to the Roman legions. Eleazar, the son of Ananias the high priest, who was the governor of the temple, influenced those who officiated in the divine service to receive no gifts or sacrifice from any foreigner. Therefore having assaulted and slain some of the Roman soldiers in their own garrison, and also religiously rejected the sacrifice of Cæsar, and refused to pay the respect which had been customarily offered for their princes, it certainly amounted to an open declaration of war. But in this movement they were not unanimous in their feelings and operations; many of the more thoughtful, wealthy, and influential demurred to such proceedings, and convened an assembly for the purpose of dissuading them from entering on such rash measures, and expressed a desire for reconciliation. To this the people generally would not hearken, but followed the advice of Eleazar. The chiefs and nobles then applied to Florus and Agrippa for assistance. Florus refused any aid; but Agrippa sent 3,000 soldiers to put down the war party, or arrest their progress.

The party that was anxious to restore peace obtained possession of the upper part of the city, while the lower city and the temple remained in possession of the war party. The rebels attacked the castle of Masada, which was held by the Romans, and slaughtered the garrison that held it; they also captured the tower of Antonia,

and the palaces of Agrippa and Bernice ; the residence of the high priest was set on fire ; and Ananias, having concealed himself, with his brother, was discovered, and slain by the infuriated people. It is not certain, but most likely, this was the same person who commanded St. Paul to be smitten on the mouth while he was speaking, and to whom the Apostle said, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall." Acts xxiii. 2, 3. If so, St. Paul spoke prophetically, though he knew not at the time that this was the high priest. And no wonder that he did not know this, because the Romans were constantly making changes in the high priesthood, just to suit their political purposes.

In the midst of these conflicts a person named Manahem, the son of Judas the Galilean, distinguished himself by assisting the rebels ; but like many other leaders of such like parties he soon proved himself unworthy of confidence and support. His pride and cruelty became unsufferable, and with some of his unprincipled supporters he was put to death, and the people regarded Eleazar as their chief ; and such was the vigour and determination of Eleazar and his adherents, that the Roman garrison feared the result, and proposed terms of peace. They promised to surrender on condition that Eleazar would guarantee their personal safety. This he solemnly promised ; but so soon as he had them in possession he violated his engagement, and had them put to death, with the exception of Metillus, their commander, who saved his life by consenting to the rite of circumcision ; by which we are to

understand that Metillus professed to relinquish heathenism, and engaged to support the interests of the Jews. He became a political convert, by submitting to a religious rite.

It is rather remarkable, that on the very same day, and according to some historians, about the same hour that this crime of killing the Romans, after promising to spare their lives, was perpetrated at Jerusalem, 20,000 Jews were massacred at Cæsarea, and those who escaped the sword were arrested and sent by Florus to the galleys. This enormity aroused the whole Jewish nation, and in a state of desperation, bordering on madness, they furiously rushed forth, sword in hand, upon the Syrian cities, slaughtering their inhabitants, and burning their property, without any limits or restriction. The Syrians in return put to death every Jew, and every one they suspected being a Jew, either in blood or in principle. Only a few cities escaped this dreadful and bloody storm; in which it is said there were a number of Christians, who under providence, might at that time be defended. The dreadful news of this outrage reached Alexandria, where the Roman soldiers, out of revenge, slew 50,000 Jews. The people of Damascus also killed 10,000. It is supposed that not less than 100,000 Jews were slain in these conflicts, in various places, before the regular campaigns and sieges under the command of Vespasian commenced.



CHAPTER XXXII.



The Roman Campaigns and Sieges in Judea.

Cestius, with an army of 20,000 men, goes to put down the insurrection in Judea—He commits plunder and destruction—He is defeated by the Jews—Many of the Jews leave the city under fearful apprehensions—The false hope of the Jews—Josephus made governor of Galilee—Cestius attributes his defeat to Florus—Vespasian appointed by Nero to conduct the campaigns in Judea—The combined forces of Vespasian amounted to 60,000 men—The siege of Jotapata—Josephus defends the city—How the city was captured and Josephus taken prisoner—The prediction of Josephus respecting Vespasian and his son Titus critically examined—The veracity and integrity of Josephus as an historian considered—His own defence, “Josephus against Apion”—The siege of Japha by Tragan—The Galilean massacre, in which 15,000 perished—The Samaritan massacre, in which 11,000 perished—The siege of Joppa, sea and land fights—A destructive tempest—Agrippa entertains the Roman commander, and they return God thanks for enabling them to destroy the Jews and their cities—The plan adopted to subdue the Tiberians and Taricheans, cities in the kingdom of Agrippa—How Titus conducted the siege of Tarchea, and took the city—The dishonourable conduct of Vespasian after the siege—Terrible slaughter and destruction throughout the country.



UCH was the strength and determination of the insurgent Jews, and so terrible were their operations against their enemies, that the Syrian governor began to be alarmed, and deemed it high time to prepare his forces to arrest their progress. Cestius therefore placed himself at the head of a powerful army, consisting of more than 20,000 troops, and with these he marched into Judea, not merely to put down the insurrection, but to plunder and to destroy all that came in his way. Wherever he found any Jewish inhabitants he put them to death, and siezed their property; and if the people fled with such of their property as they could carry off, he burnt their deserted habitations. Thus, with fire and sword, in his various divisions, he went through the country, until he arrived within about seven miles from Jerusalem, where his detachments met and formed an encampment at a place called Gabus. Josephus seems to think, had Cestius, with this force well arranged, made a vigorous assault upon the city, it would have been taken and an end put to the war, and that this was only prevented by Florus bribing the officers of Cestius to encourage a delay; but in this the historian might have been mistaken. It is also intimated that the same secret influence induced Cestius to break up the siege and retreat from Jerusalem: this also wants confirmation. There is not much doubt that Cestius would have rejoiced in capturing Jerusalem, and humbling the rebels, or even destroying both, had he seen it possible. But the infuriated Jews made such a terrible onslaught on

his army in the commencement, that they struck terror through the whole camp, and the cowardly general never seemed to recover the shock. He succeeded in restoring discipline, and with his overpowering forces drove the Jews within the walls of the city, but his valour and courage failed him. When he should have made the assault he withdrew from the city, suddenly broke up his camp, and commenced a wavering retreat. The Jews seeing their enemy so easily beaten, took courage and eagerly pursued him. And when Cestius came to a place called Beth-horon, where his army had to march through a narrow pass, the Jews took advantage of their position and assailed them with desperate fury on each side. The cavalry especially were sorely harassed, for they could neither fight nor flee. They could not so much as defend themselves from the darts and missiles of the enemy. The army of Cestius was really defeated with great loss of life, and all his military engines fell into the hands of the pursuers.

The Jews, after this victory, returned in triumph, and were reanimated to defend the city against any subsequent attack, and with a determination to elevate their nation to independent glory. Their success had been great, and their loss very small, which they regarded as a prelude to future and final success. They little thought that such dreadful calamities awaited them which afterwards came to pass, and that the terrible judgments of heaven were about to be poured upon them for their impiety in rejecting the Saviour. There were some however at this time who took a reasonable

estimate of the gigantic power of their enemies; and others, who were Christians, regarding the warning of Christ, left the city and sought out places of refuge elsewhere, remote from the seat of war. Many of them went to Pella, beyond the Jordan. In a traditional account preserved by Eusebius, this event of the Christians leaving Jerusalem, is placed before the commencement of the war, but this probably means prior to the campaigns of Vespasian, which terminated in the destruction of the city, or they might leave in companies at two or three different times; all circumstances considered, this would most likely be the case.

The Jews seemed to be fully aware that the defeat of Cestius had not ended their war with Rome. They knew too much of the power and ambitious pride of the Cæsars, and the desire of the Senate to rule the world, to suppose that these masters of so many barbarous and civilized nations would tamely submit because a comparative few of their foreign troops had been defeated through want of efficient generalship. At least many of the more thoughtful would thus look upon the subject. They therefore set about preparing for a defensive war against the matchless power of a nation and government which was the terror of the whole civilized world, as well as masters of many barbarous nations. How amazingly infatuated they must have been to match themselves against an enemy so mighty and warlike as ancient Rome, at a time when she was in the greatness of her strength, power, and glory: so reasoned Titus with John and Simon, at the close of the siege,

when all was taken but the "upper city," and he requested them to quietly give themselves up to his clemency, and offer no further opposition. But wicked as they were, under the force of strange delusion, and a remembrance how God had delivered their illustrious ancestors, they relied on divine assistance. They overlooked, or did not understand the fact, that as they had rejected Christ, God had now cast them off, and that they were left to themselves to fight their own battles, and fall by the hand which God, in his retributive providence and justice had appointed to crush them. But we must return to historical facts.

By the mutual consent of the war party in council, the city was committed to the care of Joseph, the son of Gorion, and Ananias the high priest; Idumea, with other districts and cities, to various leaders and commanders; and Josephus, the historian, was invested with the government of the whole of Galilee. Cities were fortified, armies were organised, and a plan of defence on a very comprehensive scale was laid out.

Cestius, in a despatch forwarded to Rome, had announced his defeat, and in order to make the best of it, by way of exonerating himself from blame, attributed his misfortune to Florus, who, he said, "had kindled the war." Nero, on receiving this intelligence, without delay appointed Vespasian as generalissimo, or chief commander to conduct the war in Judea. Vespasian, was a man of great military talent and extensive experience in campaigning operations, having long served in the reign of Claudius, as well as under Nero. This

distinguished general entered Judea with four Roman legions, in the spring of 67 A.D., and was met at Antioch by Agrippa, and other native princes, who were waiting his arrival with their auxiliary forces; and Titus, the son of Vespasian, went to Alexandria, and thence brought two additional legions to reinforce the invading army. The whole army, under the supreme command of Vespasian, amounted to about 60,000 men, and with this mighty force at command he commenced his operations in Galilee. We cannot undertake to record all the particulars of the notable campaign, but shall notice such as appear to be of the greatest importance, so as to give the reader a general and correct idea of its progress and tremendous results. We shall commence with the siege of Jotapata. This place was in Galilee, and consequently under the command of Josephus himself, who defended the city for the space of 47 days, with the dreadful loss of 40,000 persons. The details of this siege are recorded at considerable length by the Jewish historian, from which we gather the following facts. The Roman general first cast up a fortification round the whole city, which in military phraseology is called "lines of circumvallation." This was done to prevent the possibility of the besieged making their escape. This being done the light troops advanced towards the city, who opened the attack by annoying the besieged with missiles. These were followed by the legionary troops, conducted by their general. The Jews, nothing daunted at the appearance of these renowned veterans, or the greatness of

their numbers, furiously rushed upon the Romans, and in this first attack succeeded in driving them back to their lines, and for a time maintained a combat with terrible energy and great success, and they became so animated as to lose all apprehension of danger, and boldly defied the efforts of the enemy. This only served the purpose of stirring up the Romans to increased activity and determination to reduce the city. They had immediate recourse to such measures and operations as they thought would bring the besieged to surrender. But the city was still bravely defended by the skill of the commander and the valour of the citizens. The Jews also harassed their enemies by incessant sallies, at which kind of fighting the Jews were most expert. As days passed over without the Romans making much progress, Vespasian resolved to turn the siege into a blockade, and thereby bring the inhabitants to submission by starvation; but as the Jews had ample supplies to serve them for a long time, this failed. The Roman general therefore resolved to assault the city and take it by storm. This was boldly resisted by the Jews, who inspired each other to the most daring and desperate acts. They rushed forth like an overwhelming torrent upon their enemies, and even penetrated the Roman camp; though frequently driven back by their resolute and well-disciplined enemies, they, for several days together, repeated these furious sallies, and thereby effectually checked the operations of the Romans. But at length, after a desperate struggle, the city was taken. The Romans took the ad-

vantage of a thick mist which surrounded the city, in which mist they were concealed from observation. Enveloped in this vaporous mantle, a select number of Roman soldiers, led on by Titus, who headed the storming party, silently approached the city; they succeeded in getting within the walls before the besieged had time to defend themselves, and the citadel was in possession of the Romans. The inhabitants were unmercifully put to death by the exasperated soldiers, and the city was soon one vast slaughter-house. Some who had concealed themselves in dens and caves were hunted out and killed, and those who escaped the sword were taken prisoners. So either dead or alive all the inhabitants, together with the city, fell into the hands of the conquerors.

In reference to Josephus, we are furnished with the following particulars, which we shall put in as few words as possible. When he was on the point of perishing in the general slaughter, he leaped into a dry well, in which he found a cavern branching from one side; there, with forty others, he took refuge, hoping to escape the vigilance of the Romans; but they were soon discovered. Vespasian offered him life and friendship if he would surrender, but he at first refused. After making this offer a third time, and still receiving a refusal, the Roman soldiers were preparing to throw firebrands into the well for the purpose of suffocating all the inmates of the cavern, on which Josephus proposed to surrender, but his enraged and imprisoned companions accused him of insincerity and treachery, and they threatened

him with instant death if he attempted to escape. They moreover urged upon him to commit suicide, and die as a general of the Jews, rather than yield himself up to the Romans. Josephus, in return, reasoned with them on the folly and crime of self-murder. He said, "Now self-murder is a crime most remote from the common nature of all animals, and an instance of impiety against God, our Creator." On this subject he reasoned with them at considerable length. "But desperation shut their ears, as they had long devoted themselves to die." They were so irritated at his reasoning that they even attempted to take away his life, as a traitor and a coward, on which he assumed his authority as their general, and thus deterred them from carrying their rashness into fatal execution ; and, trusting to providence, he placed his life in danger by submitting to cast lots which should be first put to death, so that no one should perish by his own hand of suicide. This was done repeatedly until all were slain, excepting only Josephus and another. These two mutually agreed to live, and yield themselves up to the enemy. Josephus was led by Nicanor to Vespasian, when the Romans crowded to see him, all anxious to get a glimpse of the man who had so distinguished himself in the defence of the city and his nation. The venerable appearance of this Hebrew general corresponded with the valour and skill he had so long displayed in protecting the city against their assaults. Titus, and some other of the principal generals of the Roman army, expressed a desire that his life should be

spared, to which Vespasian consented, "but gave strict orders that he should be kept with the greatest caution, as though he would, in a very little time, send him to Nero." When Josephus heard Vespasian give these orders he expressed a desire to communicate in private something to the Roman commander which he had on his mind, on which they were all ordered to withdraw except Titus and two other friends, when Josephus delivered his communication. He said, "Thou, O Vespasian, thinkest no more than that thou hast taken Josephus himself captive; but I came to thee as a messenger of greater tidings; for had not I been sent of God to thee I knew what was the law of the Jews in this case, and how it becomes generals to die. Dost thou send me to Nero? For why? Are Nero's successors till they come to thee still alive? Thou, O Vespasian, art Cæsar, and emperor, thou and thy son. Bind me still faster and keep me for thyself, for thou, O Cæsar, art not only lord over me, but over the land and sea, and all mankind; and certainly I deserve to be kept in closer custody than I am now in, in order to be punished, if I rashly affirm anything of God." (Wars, b. iii. c. viii. s. 9.) What credit Vespasian gave to this prediction, which foretold his elevation to the throne, we cannot safely say, but, for some reason or another, he concluded to keep him a prisoner, and treated him with every mark of kindness. Josephus says Vespasian did not believe him, but regarded the whole "as a cunning trick, in order to his own preservation;" but that afterwards having ascertained that he (Josephus)

had predicted to the people of Jotapata that the city should be taken on the forty-seventh day of the siege, and that he should be brought alive to the Romans, he believed the predictions concerning himself, and treated Josephus in the most obliging manner. It is therefore evident that, in these two particular cases at least, Josephus assumed the character of a prophet, and a little deliberation on this subject is not here out of place, especially so as some writers, we think, have spoken unguardedly in reference to the conduct of the historian on this occasion.

One writer says, "That Josephus was not a prophet requires no demonstration ; his sagacity, his knowledge of the actual state of the Roman empire, and of the universal detestation of Nero might easily induce him most confidently to assert the certain imperial elevation of a man like Vespasian, of the greatest military talent and power in the world. The fact must have been that he assumed a character to which he had no claim ; that he made a blasphemous use of the name of God ; and that a transaction of such a character and for such a purpose tarnished his memory with the darkest dishonour." Such is the dogmatical conclusion of a man sitting in judgment over the secret impressions and conduct of his fellow man, a conclusion which we dare not endorse without clearer evidence of deception than we have at present. Our learned author says, "it needs no demonstration," &c., but we think it does ; and that no man should be branded as a liar and blasphemer without full proof that he is really guilty of

such daring crimes, especially a man who stands so high as an author, and whose works are so extensively read and studied by men of almost every nation, rank, and profession. If a prophet be a person who foretells future events, Josephus was either a prophet, or otherwise he made up this story after the events took place. The latter, we think, no man will attempt to prove. But we are told, or given to understand, that he was not a prophet divinely inspired, or in any way instructed by God to foretell these future events, and on this rests his blasphemy, *i. e.*, in professing to be instructed by God to foretell those events, while he knew at the same time this was not the case, but that his sagacity and knowledge of the state of the Roman empire led him to make these assertions. If we admit this to be the case, he must have been a man of almost miraculous sagacity. For we must suppose him capable of foreseeing that Vespasian would outlive Nero, though he was more than twenty years the older man, and his life in constant jeopardy. He must have foreseen that when the emperor died, his immediate successors would be either removed by death or some other cause from the imperial seat before the death of Vespasian, for Vespasian was not the immediate successor of Nero. Galba was proclaimed emperor, and reigned seven months; and next to him Otho was made emperor, but being defeated in battle in Germany, killed himself. He must also have foreseen, by his sagacity, that Titus would outlive his father, though sometimes "in the forefront of the hottest battles," and that he also would be made

emperor in preference to any other person in the empire. Now we think this was rather too much for any man to accurately foresee, by his ordinary powers, without some supernatural assistance, especially in those changing and eventful times.

Josephus professed to have had some particular dreams, in which it was signified to him beforehand, both the future calamities of the Jews, and the events which concerned the Roman empire (Wars b. iii. c. viii. s. 3). This was either true or false. If true, his prediction concerning Vespasian is readily accounted for. Now we have reason to believe that Josephus was particularly raised up or preserved by divine providence to record facts relative to the destruction of Jerusalem, the Roman conquest, and the dispersion of the Jews. And we think this statement of his, respecting his dreams, may be admitted as truthful. If rejected as a mere invention to serve a political and selfish purpose, he was a false man, and is not entitled to our credit on any subject further than we can prove him to be correct from other sources. Why not Josephus be favoured with extraordinary dreams, as well as the ungodly Babylonish monarch? We think that, in all respects, he was a more worthy character than Nebuchadnezzar, who, in a dream had a representation presented to his mind which indicated the rise and fall of the four great empires, extending over a period of a thousand years. It is true there is this difference, the prophet Daniel explained to the king the prophetic import of his dreams, while Josephus was, according to his own account, enabled to

understand the meaning of his particular dreams himself. It is a fact, that what Josephus told Vespasian concerning him and his son Titus actually came to pass; and we think he could not augur so accurately, in reference to individuals and circumstances. A knowledge of certain laws of nature may enable a man to prognosticate what will happen at certain periods, in relation to the operations of those laws; and as there are certain laws of mind which lead to positive results, a prudent man may foresee, in a general sense, what will happen in the progress of society. For instance, clear and substantial reasoning founded upon facts will eventually produce conviction and consequent changes; we may, therefore, safely foretell of certain reformatations and improvements which will take place in an enlightened and civilized nation. But such like prognostications are very different from foretelling particular events in relation to individuals, such as those predicted by Josephus in relation to Vespasian and Titus. The former is what must take place according to the nature of things, the latter what possibly may take place, but it depends upon such a plurality of contingent and problematic circumstances, or on the over-rulings of divine providence in God's moral government, that no man can positively and safely predicate concerning them without supernatural aid.

Having made these observations we leave each reader to judge for himself, without pronouncing whether or not Josephus was, according to the general acceptance of the term, an inspired prophet, and we dare not

designate him, neither can we regard him, as a lying blasphemer, "who has tarnished his memory with the darkest dishonour;" for, notwithstanding the occasional inaccuracies and discrepancies which are to be found in his writings, we cannot but regard him, on the whole, as a most truthful and sincere author, whose learning and labours have been of incalculable service to millions of the human race. Joseph Scaliger, who is acknowledged to be a most learned man, and said to be "the most competent judge as to the authority of Josephus," says, in the Prolegomena to his "*De Emen-datione Temporum*," p. 17, "Josephus is the most diligent and the greatest lover of truth of all writers, nor are we afraid to affirm of him, that it is more safe to believe him, not only as to the affairs of the Jews, but also as to those that are foreign to them, than all the Greek and Latin writers; and this, because his fidelity and his compass of learning are everywhere conspicuous." What extremely different views great and learned men entertain on different subjects, and, at times, how unguardedly and extravagantly do they express their sentiments. One says Josephus is false and blasphemous, another that he is the greatest lover of truth of all writers.

As the veracity and authority of Josephus as a historian are called in question by other historians, as we shall hereafter have more distinctly to notice, we may here just record what he states of himself and his writings in his able reply to Apion, especially respecting his Book of Antiquities. Though this is entitled

“Josephus against Apion,” on examination it is found to be against the Greeks in general who disputed the correctness of his accounts respecting the Jewish nation, and attempted to calumniate his history. In book i. sec. 9. he says, “As for myself, I have composed a true history of that whole war, and all the particulars that occurred therein, as having been concerned in all its transactions, for I acted as general of those amongst us that are named Galileans, as long as it was possible for us to make any opposition. I was then seized by the Romans and became a captive. Vespasian and Titus had me kept under a guard, and forced me to attend them continually. At the first I was put in bonds, but was set at liberty afterwards, and sent to accompany Titus when he came from Alexandria to the siege of Jerusalem, during which time there was nothing done which escaped my knowledge, for what happened in the Roman camp I saw and wrote down carefully, and what information the deserters brought out of the city I was the only man that understood them. Afterwards I got leisure at Rome, and when all my materials were prepared for that work, I made use of some persons to assist me in learning the Greek tongue, and by these means I composed the history of those transactions; and I was so well assured of the truth of what I related, that I first of all appealed to those that had the supreme command in that war, Vespasian and Titus, as witnesses for me, for to them I presented those books first of all, and after them to many of the Romans who had been in that war.

I also sold them to many of my own countrymen who understood the Greek philosophy, among whom were Julius Archelaus, Herod of Chalcis, a person of great gravity, and king Agrippa himself, a person that deserves the greatest admiration. Now all these men bore their testimony to me that I had the strictest regard for truth, who would not have dissembled the matter nor been silent, if I, of ignorance or favour to any side, either had given false colours to actions or omitted any of them." Here we are informed in a few words who and what Josephus was at the commencement of the Roman war in Judea, and the circumstances in which he was placed after the fall of Jotapata, and also the manner in which he brought out his history immediately subsequent to the termination of the war, under the inspection of such persons as were able to judge of its correctness. Let these particulars be borne in mind.

About the time that Jotapata was taken by Vespasian, Japha, another strongly fortified city, was besieged by Trajan. The Japhians, on the approach of the Roman army, boldly came out to give them battle, but were soon put to flight, and in their hasty retreat were slain in great numbers. The city was surrounded with two walls, and when the fugitives returned they were closely pursued by the enemy, and to their dismay they found the gates of the second wall closed to prevent the entrance of the Romans, and being closely pursued by the troops of Trajan, many thousands were cut down, while others committed suicide, rather than perish by the enemies'

sword. The Romans soon made breaches through the second wall, and took possession of the city. But still the Japhians refused to submit, they maintained a desperate struggle in the streets for six hours, when they were obliged to yield to the overpowering strength of the enemy.

Immediately after the taking of Japha, followed another dreadful massacre, in which 15,000 Galileans fell by the swords of their enemies. The Samaritans also shared in this calamity. On Mount Gerizim a number of Samaritans had assembled to defend themselves against the invading army, and being recognized, a detachment of Romans, under the command of Cerealis, surrounded them, and killed upwards of 11,000; and it being in the heat of summer, and very hot weather, many died of thirst and disease.

The army of Vespasian, after completing the siege and destruction of Jotapata, proceeded to Joppa. This city being situated on the sea shore, and the inhabitants having in possession a large number of vessels, gave rise to a new scene of action. We may also just mention the character of its population. Many of them were persons who had escaped from the cities demolished by Cestius, in the commencement of the war. They fled to Joppa as a place of refuge, where they built themselves a number of piratical vessels, and determined to go off to sea, and pirate the trading ships on the coast of Syria, Phenicia, and Egypt. Vespasian hearing of their intention and conspiracy, sent off a portion of his troops by night, and as the city was unguarded, with orders to

take it at once. There was no resistance made to the advancement of the Roman troops, and consequently they took immediate possession of the place. The inhabitants, according to their pre-arrangements, took to their ships, and put out to sea beyond the reach of the enemies' darts: but they were not secure. The winds and the waves fought against them, a violent tempest arose, dashed their vessels one against another, and the shore being rocky and rough, and the vessels but slenderly built, many of them were broken to pieces, while others were overwhelmed and lost in the sea. Many, rather than escape to the shore to be cut in pieces by the cruel invaders, committed suicide, so that one way or another nearly all of them perished. Josephus concludes his awful description of this siege, and the massacre of those who were driven on shore by the force of the wind and waves, in the following language, "The sea was bloody a long way, and the maritime ports were full of dead bodies; for the Romans came upon those that were carried to the shore, and destroyed them; and the number of the bodies that were thrown out of the sea were 4,200, and the Romans utterly destroyed the city." (Wars, b. iii. c. 9.)

After the destruction of Joppa, Vespasian paid a friendly visit to Agrippa. In this he had a two-fold object in view; partly to refresh his army, and partly to put down the seditious party in Agrippa's dominions, that he might be satisfied that all was right and secure in that part of the empire. Agrippa gave the Roman commander a splendid entertainment, and afforded all

possible comfort to his fatigued army. Here Vespasian remained twenty-one days feasting with the king, "and publicly returned God thanks for the good success he had had in his undertaking," in the destruction of the city, and the slaughtering of human beings.

On Vespasian being informed that the Tiberians were fond of innovations, and that the Taricheans had revolted, he deemed it proper, for the sake of Agrippa, to make an expedition against those cities. He accordingly sent for Titus to bring three legions, and instructed him to pitch his camp about three miles and a half from Tiberias, where he could be seen by the inhabitants. From this squadron of the Roman army, Valerian was sent to the city with fifty horsemen, peaceably to exhort the inhabitants to give assurance of their fidelity. When Valerian came near to the city, though he gave them tokens of friendship, the seditious party, headed by a potent man whose name was Jesus, sallied out upon them armed, whereupon Valerian and those who were with him, thinking it unsafe and improper to fight contrary to the general's orders, fled and left behind them some of the horses. But the seniors of the people, feeling grieved at the conduct of Jesus and his party, went to the Roman camp, and in humble submission pleaded for mercy. Vespasian, for the sake of Agrippa, and after satisfying himself as to the peaceable disposition of the people generally, yielded compliance with their supplications, and spared the city, which was soon restored to its former quiet state. Jesus and his party, thinking it unsafe to remain in Tiberias,

fled to Tarichea, which was the next city attacked by the Roman army.

Here the inhabitants were prepared for resistance, and were determined not to submit without a struggle with the invaders. Tarichea, like Tiberias, was situated on the shores of the lake of Gennesaret, and not far distant from that place. Titus was appointed by his father to conduct the siege of this place, on which occasion he gave a striking display of his sagacity and ability, worthy of the character which he uniformly maintained as a military officer. In prosecuting the siege he was violently opposed both by land and water, for the Taricheans had got ready a number of ships on the lake, that in case they were beaten by land they might retire to them and be able to carry on a sea fight. When Titus arrived with his troops he found that the Taricheans had commenced fighting with some Romans who had gone before him, from a line of battle ships, a short distance from the shore, and at every opportunity they sallied forth from their vessels on the Roman camp. When Titus took a survey of the position of the insurgents and the paucity of the Roman forces, he deemed a reinforcement necessary, and accordingly sent information to his father to that effect. Trajan was then sent with four hundred horse, and Antonius and Silo with 2,000 archers, to strengthen Titus. With this united force the siege effectually commenced. In the first skirmish Titus beat the Jews, but as many as could escaped hastily and fled into the city, and the conflict ended without much apparent

advantage to the Romans. When the vanquished rebels retreated within the walls of the city a dispute arose among the inhabitants (many of whom refused to fight) and the refugees, who wished to compel them to take up arms against the Romans. Titus took advantage of this tumult, promptly led his men down to the lake, and there entered the city. Those who were on the walls were so struck with terror at his boldness that they dared not venture to give him battle: thus the city was taken. The invaders commenced the work of indiscriminate slaughter, and many of the inhabitants were instantly numbered with the dead. Many more who fled to their boats and ventured on the lake were pursued by the Romans, who prepared vessels to follow them, and as no quarters were given them, those who thus escaped the sword in the city and a watery grave were slain, so that the strand was soon covered with dead bodies. Seven thousand seven hundred perished in this siege and the subsequent slaughter which took place on the lake. With regard to those who were left alive, 6,000 of the most able-bodied were made the emperor's slaves, and upwards of 30,000 were sold for common slaves. In the capture of this city Vespasian acted a most dishonourable and infamous part towards the Jews. He promised them, on condition that they would quietly leave the city, protection and safety; but on the road where he commanded them to march he had planted his soldiers to slaughter them, with instructions to spare none but such as would be of service to the emperor, or would fetch a price in the slave

market. This infamous action will for ever stand as a blot on the character of this renowned general.

The above accounts are only specimens of the horrid, cruel, and destructive features which characterised the operations of the Roman army in the invasion of Judea, previous to the capture of Jerusalem and the complete subjugation of the Jewish nation. As further illustrations of the butchery and misery occasioned by these pitiless conquerors, we might describe the sieges of Gamala, Itabyrium, and Gischala, in which many thousands were slain and others reduced to consummate misery. The Roman legions marched through the country, in their various detachments, like overwhelming hurricanes, demolishing cities, storming garrisons, destroying provinces, shedding rivers of human blood, and in every way demonstrating their awful power of devastation. The Jews, in resistance, were fierce and terrible, reckless with regard to life and desperate in conflict. Their fortifications were strong and well garrisoned, and many of their plans for defence were skilfully arranged; but nothing which they could do could stand before the heroism and overwhelming forces of the invaders. They were an army of veterans, who were resolved on victory, commanded by two of the bravest and most successful generals which the most powerful nation in the world could produce. Vespasian, by his remarkable valour and able soldiership, had raised himself from a humble station in life to occupy a high position in the consulate and in the field; and Titus, his son, though then but young, gave full proof of his extraordinary abilities as a military commander.



CHAPTER XXXIII.

The Condition of Judea before the Siege of Jerusalem.



How the Jews were divided among themselves—Factionous parties—The pacific, the Zealots, and John of Gischala's party—20,000 Idumeans come to Jerusalem to assist the Zealots—The dreadful thunderstorm and its consequences—The horrible massacre—The Idumeans leave the city in disgust—The mock tribunal set up by the Zealots—The rise of John's party—The true character of the factionous party—The *Sicarii*, and the condition of the surrounding country.



THE next feature which claims our attention, in connection with the fall and final ruin of the Jewish nation, is the disunion and factionous contentions which prevailed among the Jews themselves. This is the more remarkable, as they must have seen that they were wasting that national strength which should have been reserved for mutual resistance against their invaders. This they most clearly saw as soon as the siege of the holy city commenced. Had they been closely and firmly united they would have strengthened each other's hands, and been better able to make a vigorous and successful resistance against their foreign

enemies. But they were divided into parties, who indulged in the most bitter animosity towards each other, and carried on their oppositions in the most cruel and destructive manner.

In the commencement of the war there were two parties; one consisted of such as were wishful to adopt pacific measures, and come to terms of agreement with the Romans, and were willing in fact to completely submit rather than carry on a war which they foresaw would involve them in misery and national ruin. The other party, who mainly consisted of Zealots, a fanatical religious party, who rose in the days of Christ, while they professed to be zealous in supporting religion and defending their nation, "they were zealous in the worst actions, and extravagant in them beyond the example of others."

The following quotation from Josephus will be sufficient to give the reader an idea of their character. Speaking of the conduct of the Zealots about this time, he says, "They undertook to dispose of the high priesthood, by casting lots for it, under a pretence that this was the ancient practice." "They sent for one of the pontifical tribes, which is called Eniachim, and cast lots which of it should be the high priest; the lot fell on one whose name was Phannias, the son of Samuel, one of the village of Aphtha. He was a man not only unworthy of the high priesthood, but that did not well know what the high priesthood was, such a mere rustic was he: yet did they hail this man, without his own consent, out of the country, as if they were acting a play

upon the stage, and adorned him with a counterfeit face ; they also put upon him the sacred garments, and upon every occasion instructed him what he was to do. This horrid piece of wickedness was sport and pastime with them." This reminds us of certain practices of religious mountebankism which are to be seen in some of our professedly christian churches at the present time. The Zealots were undoubtedly a hypocritical, wicked set of men. They were not only opposed to the Romans, but to the paying of taxes of any kind to foreigners, or submitting to their authority, which they regarded as an impious intervention between them and their God. These men, under a pretext of patriotism and loyalty to their theocracy, carried away with pride and ambition, were inflexibly obstinate and incessantly breathing out nothing but exterminating war, and a determination to restore the Jewish kingdom to its ancient theocratic glory ; while at the same time they were the most atrocious beings upon the face of the earth, a curse to their own nation, and enemies to the whole human race. "They were traitors, public robbers, and murderers."

This party was afterwards divided among themselves by John, who made his escape from the siege of Gischala. This John, who was a most unprincipled wretch, on his arrival in Jerusalem, first attached himself to the pacific party, whom he soon betrayed, and went over to the Zealots. These he soon divided, and set up a rival party of his own, which consisted of the most ferocious and profligate persons that ever existed, so that before

the siege of Jerusalem commenced, and during its progress, destruction and slaughter, occasioned by these factious parties, largely contributed to their final ruin. This internal work of destruction did not pass unnoticed by the Romans, who delayed their operations, so that after the Jews had by their anarchical measures wasted their strength, they might be the more easily taken.

The infatuated and blinded Jews were not satisfied with destroying one another, for the Zealots, at the instigation of John, applied to the Idumeans to come and assist them in slaughtering their fellow citizens. The Idumeans readily complied with the invitation, and 20,000 of them immediately marched to Jerusalem. Ananius, hearing of their approach, caused the gates to be shut against them ; but they nevertheless encamped round the city, watching for an opportunity to enter whenever the Zealots could make a way for them. To prevent this, the peace party placed a strong guard in the temple to prevent the Zealots from opening the gates, and another guard on the walls to resist the Idumeans, in case they should make any attack without.

It is very remarkable that on the first night of their encampment, as if the Almighty rose up in anger to be avenged of the bloody city for its insults offered to the divine mercy and majesty, and the deeds of its unutterable infamy, the city was visited with a most awful tempest. The Zealots however were not dismayed, but took advantage of this terrible visitation to accomplish their designs. While the rain was streaming down in

torrents, the wind roaring, and the thunder pealing, in the midst of this elemental fury, which threw the guards off their watch, the Zealots, while the earth was trembling under their feet, sawed asunder the bolts and hinges of the temple gate, without being heard; they then made a breach in the walls and let in the exulting Idumeans. "The shouts of battle now mingled with the sound of the elemental war, the Zealots and the Idumeans were successful, and the next morning 8,500 of the people were discovered to have been slain." The work of slaughter continued until upwards of 20,000 were numbered with the dead. In the dreadful massacre, many of the best and noblest citizens were slain, and their dead bodies thrown to the dogs. The sanguinary scene was too revolting even for the rapacious Idumeans, who after liberating 2,000 persons out of prison, left the doomed city in disgust. The Zealots, as if determined to darken their character with all sorts of crime, after they had wearied themselves with killing their fellow citizens, set up fictitious tribunals of judicature, and went through a course of mock trial, by which means they first tortured their victims in mind, by putting them through a sham examination, and then put them to death. By passing through this extra-judicial ordeal, they suffered a double death. If those who were brought to this scandalous kind of trial were not condemned by the judges, they were publicly beaten, and treated like the meanest criminals in the country. The description given of the despotical and barbarous conduct of the Zealots, by Josephus, is most melancholy and

revolting. The slightest manifestation of opposition to their proceedings was considered not only deserving of punishment, but a capital offence; while those who were passive were regarded as spies, and treated accordingly. The rich were looked upon as objects of envy, and deserving of punishment, and the poor and helpless were unmercifully oppressed. At length the least crime, either real or supposed, was punished with death, without any appeal or respite. This was the civil condition of Jerusalem under the maladministration of the audacious Zealots. Of course this "reign of terror" could not long continue uninterrupted. The chief men of this tyrannical party became divided among themselves, because they lost confidence in each other, and John of Gischala, not willing to submit to the authority of the Zealots, and most likely feeling himself insecure, set up a rival party. He succeeded in carrying with him the most ferocious of this profligate faction, and became their chief. This presumptuous conduct in John, the original Zealots could not endure. They considered that their dignity was insulted by his insubordination and presumption in rebelling against such a respectable and properly organised authority, as they considered themselves, and consequently deemed it expedient for the safety and well-being of civil society and domestic comfort to put him down. Not likely that such peaceably disposed people, who had such a regard for the rights of their fellow citizens, could tolerate such a factious and disorderly man as John of Gischala, to usurp authority, and exercise lordship over the peaceable

inhabitants of the city. On the other hand, John thought himself of too much importance, and had so much regard for the honour of his own character, and was too well supported by his high and noble-minded adherents, to relinquish his lofty position and patriotic purposes, to gratify the pride and ambition of these self-constituted grandees, whom he regarded as nothing better than desperate demagogues. But the subject is really too grave for further irony.

These bold and audacious outlaws, including both parties, being filled with malignant animosity, set to work and quarrelled with each other, *chiefly in words*, "but they fought earnestly against the people which of them should bring home the greatest prey." Here was seen the true character of these seditious parties. Whatever they pretended, their object was to rob, plunder, and murder the peaceable inhabitants of the city; and they seemed to study to rival each other in the most daring crimes and acts of selfishness.

We find also that the condition of the surrounding country was no better than that of the city. A band of murderous robbers, called "*the Sicarii*," had taken possession of the fortress of Masada, and with Simon, the son of Gorias, at their head, overran the country, plundering villages, and committing all kinds of atrocious depredations. And besides this lawless gang, there were many bands of desperadoes imitating the example of "*the Sicarii*." Thus the whole country was in constant danger from these gangs of thieves and murderers. This was the miserable condition of Judea

just before the siege of Jerusalem, which we shall next attempt to describe. But it will only be an attempt, for no language can fully present to the mind of the reader a tithe of the miseries endured by the besieged during the seven months the city was surrounded by the Roman army. Neither can we at this period estimate the amount of property destroyed within the walls of the city, and the fearful loss of human life occasioned by the besiegers and of the factious parties. We only undertake to give a general idea of these things, and must leave the contemplative mind to ponder on the horrid catastrophe.





CHAPTER XXXIV.

Historical Sketch of Jerusalem.



Historical sketch of Jerusalem—Its original foundation—It was anciently known by the name of Salem—Inhabited by the Jebusites—Taken by David and constituted the capital of the Hebrew empire—Its condition in the time of Solomon—It was taken by Nebuchadnezzar—Rebuilt by Nehemiah—The various sieges to which it has been subjected—It is frequently referred to in Scripture—The scene of our Saviour's miracles, death, and resurrection—The site of the city—Various opinions of travellers respecting the city—Its magnitude and fortifications—Its external appearance—Its civil and social condition when besieged by the Romans—Its population—The strength of the Roman army—The first visit of Titus to Jerusalem—His plan of the siege—Scenographic grandeur—The infatuation of the Jews.



BEFORE attempting any description of the siege of this ancient and venerable city (Jerusalem), there are a few particulars which it may be interesting to notice; viz., the place, the inhabitants, and the besieging army. Every Bible reader is familiar with the word Jerusalem, which denotes the celebrated capital of the ancient Hebrew

empire. It is unquestionably a place of very remote date. Its original foundations, it is probable, were laid at a period as far remote in the retrospect as the origin of Babylon, or soon after the confusion of tongues; for in the days of Abraham it is mentioned in such a way as to represent it as the capital of a kingdom, of which that mysterious personage, Melchizedek, was the king and priest; for most judicious commentators allow that by Salem is meant Jerusalem. The Psalmist says "In Judah God is known; his name is great in Israel. In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion." Psalm lxxvi. 1, 2. From Salem its name was changed to Jebus, and afterwards, by compounding the two words, it was called Jerusalem. In this place God was worshipped in the patriarchal age, for Melchizedek, king of Salem, was a priest of the Most High God. After the Israelites came into the land of Canaan, this city, by conquest and divine promise, fell into their hands; and when David was made king of Judea he magnified and aggrandised it in a manner suitable to the greatness and glory of his kingdom.

It was at this place where the Jebusites insulted David and his army, when they came from Hebron to take possession of the kingdom of Judah, by placing on the walls the blind, the lame, and maimed persons, by way of derision, to signify that these disabled persons were sufficient to prevent his entrance, at which David was so enraged that he immediately laid siege to the city and took it. David cast out the Jebusites and rebuilt the city, after which it was frequently called

“the city of David,” and he abode there all the time he reigned. It was therefore thence regarded as the royal city of the Jewish nation, and remained such during the dynasty of the house of David, which continued until the Babylonish captivity, a period of about 400 years.

In the days of Solomon Jerusalem rose to great splendour, and was adorned with the sacred temple, the most costly and magnificent edifice ever erected on earth. There Jehovah deigned to manifest his peculiar glory at the dedication of the temple, and the visible symbols of his presence in shining forth from between the golden cherubim over the mercy-seat in the Holy of Holies. This city was frequently besieged, and sometimes considerably damaged, by invaders and rival kings, and at length it was taken by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon; taken by the same monarch a second time and plundered; and a third time, when he burnt both the city and the temple, and left the whole a heap of ruins. It was rebuilt after the captivity by Nehemiah, under the patronage of the Persian monarch; and the religious institutions were restored within its sacred precincts. It was spared by Alexander in his Asiatic conquests, taken by Antiochus Epiphanes, plundered and burnt by the Syrians, who also massacred many of the inhabitants. It was restored by the Maccabees, under whom it stood several sieges. It was taken by Pompey, who did it much damage, but did not destroy it, and again by Herod the Great, assisted by Sosius. After Herod was made king he restored

the city to its former magnificence, rebuilt the temple on a large scale, and adorned it in a style of imposing grandeur; and after him the city was enlarged by Agrippa to accommodate the increasing inhabitants.

Ever after the erection of the holy temple Jerusalem was regarded by the Jews with deep and sincere veneration. Even in the state of their apostacy, when their rebellious conduct had rendered them unworthy of possessing it, when in captivity they turned their faces towards the city of their solemnities, and said, "O Jerusalem, if I forget thee let my right hand forget her cunning; and if I prefer not Zion to my chief joy let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth." Their inspired poets sung of its charms, and spoke largely and beautifully of its glory, and even now the wandering Jew, wherever he finds himself, turns to the once-holy city, and with reverential expectation looks forward to the period when his degraded race will return to Zion with songs of praise. Nor is it, in a certain sense, less charming to the Christian. He regards the land in which the Saviour was born with feelings of peculiar interest. It was in the temple at Jerusalem where Christ gave the first significant manifestation of his superhumanity; and it was here he displayed his divine authority and majesty in clearing the temple of its merchantmen, who had converted the holy place into a den of thieves. It was in and about this city he performed many of his mighty and gracious miracles, and opened the rich treasures of his everlasting gospel,

uttered his awful predictions, and denounced the hypocritical Pharisees and ungodly Sadducees. Over this city he wept tears of unutterable sympathy, while he exclaimed, "O Jerusalem, if thou hadst known the things which concern thy peace, but now are they for ever hid from thine eyes." In Gethsemane he sweat as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground; and on Calvary he died to atone for the sin of the world. Here he burst the bonds of death, and rose in glorious triumph from the grave, having conquered death and him who had the power of death, that is the devil; and from Bethany, near Jerusalem, he ascended up into glory. A place thus honoured with the personal presence and teaching of the divine Redeemer of the human race cannot be regarded otherwise than with extraordinary emotions by every true Christian.

Beside, Jerusalem is a term frequently made use of to signify that eternal city, built of imperishable materials, which is the home of the saints, and the dwelling-place of the glorified, whose walls are jasper, its gates pearls, and its streets of pure and polished gold, the heavenly shekinah is its light, and an eternal weight of glory its enjoyments. In the very name of this city there seems something sacred and interesting, occasioned by the various religious ideas associated therewith.

We cannot here undertake to give a full description of this wonderful city. Those who wish to be gratified in this respect may read Josephus' Wars, b. v. c. 4 and 5, where he will find recorded many interesting particulars respecting both the city and the temple, at which he

will be more than a little astonished, if he has not read those accounts previously.

With regard to the site of the city, men differ in their opinions. Some travellers speak of it as being much inferior to many localities in Judea, which might have been selected on which to have built the metropolis of the empire, and that it simply excels as a place of security, having a large amount of natural defence. Others have taken a somewhat different view of the subject, and believe, all things considered, that it is the most suitable place. It is impossible for any man at the present time to judge, or at least to be certain, what it was in many particulars in the time of David, and up to the period of the Babylonish captivity. The Psalmist speaking of it says, "It is beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north is the city of the great king." Most likely a great deal of the beauty which once surrounded it has now passed away; and as the city itself retains nothing of its former glory, it will altogether have a very different appearance.

In reference to its magnitude, it could never be regarded as a very large city, compared with many either in ancient or modern times; its circumference being only four miles, and now not more than two and a half; only about the size of one of our second class English towns. It was not a tenth the size of either ancient Babylon or modern London, but it excelled either of these cities in the grandeur and beauty of its external appearance, and within its walls were buildings of un-

rivalled splendour. Its walls were dwarfs compared with those of "the golden city," and its temple was not half so high as the temple of Belus; neither were its palaces equal in magnitude to those of Nebuchadnezzar's; but the transcendent splendour of the temple, and the richness of its materials, its extraordinary arrangements and costly adornings, the solidity and compactness of its treble walls, ornamented with lofty and beautiful towers, gave it a grander and far more imposing appearance than "Babylon the Great." The one was a wonder of greatness, the other astonishingly splendid and august to look upon. The fortifications of Jerusalem were immensely strong. It was surrounded with three walls of great thickness, of skilful and admirable workmanship. The outer wall was at the time of the siege new, a work commenced by Agrippa, who laid its foundations with stones twenty cubits long and ten cubits broad, and so connected, says Josephus, "that they could never have been easily undermined by any iron tools, or shaken by any engines." This wall was twenty cubits high, above which it had battlements of two cubits and turrets of three cubits, so that the entire altitude from the base was twenty-five cubits. In English measurement, from the base of the wall to the apex of the turrets would be about forty-four feet. In connection with this wall there were ninety towers, square and solid as the wall itself, twenty cubits high; above were large rooms, and over the rooms cisterns to receive rain water. On the middle wall there were forty towers, and on the old wall sixty. Beside these one hundred and

ninety towers in connection with the walls, there were the more lofty and magnificent towers of Psephinus, Hippicus, and two others built by Herod the Great, named after his brother Phasacelus and his wife Mariamne. These four towers were all very large, beautiful and strongly built, Josephus says, "beyond all that were in the habitable earth." And they were moreover so situated as to appear to great advantage. But the grandest object, and the most conspicuous building, was the temple and its numerous appendages, all built of pure white marble. "The outward face of the temple in its front wanted nothing that was likely to surprise either men's minds or their eyes, for it was covered all over with plates of gold of great weight, and at the first rising of the sun reflected back a fiery splendour, and made those who forced themselves to look upon it to turn their eyes away, just as they would have done at the sun's own rays." (Wars. b. v. c. 5.) Hence the external appearance of the city, notwithstanding the moral disorder which reigned in the interior, would be to the Romans amazingly grand, and within the walls there were many costly buildings and great riches which were not conspicuous.

Dr. Porter, who for fourteen years was a resident of the Holy Land, in a lecture which he recently delivered, on the remarkable excavations now being made by English engineers in and about Jerusalem, describes some enormous substructures of the temple which they have discovered, quite sufficient, in our opinion, to corroborate the statements made by the Jewish historian,

which some have been inclined to reject as exaggerations, and unworthy of credit. In describing these discoveries, Dr. P. said (speaking of the south-east angle of the temple's foundation), "Here is a magnificent fragment of the temple, and one of the finest specimens of mural architecture in the world. The stones are colossal, ranging from ten feet to thirty feet in length, by five feet in height; all noble 'corner-stones,' polished after the similitude of a palace. The elevation of the wall above the present surface is seventy-three feet. The Royal Engineers sank a shaft to the foundation, which they discovered at the depth of sixty feet. The angle must, when perfect, have been one hundred and forty feet high. And this is not all. It stands on the rocky side of Moriah, which sinks, almost perpendicularly, two hundred feet to the bottom of the Kidron. And, besides, on the top of the wall stood the royal porch, one hundred feet in height. Consequently the summit of the porch was two hundred and forty feet above the foundation of the wall, and four hundred and forty feet above the Kidron! We now go over to inspect the still more extraordinary discoveries at the south-west angle. We pass on our way two ancient gates, which opened from the low suburb of Ophel, where the priests dwelt, to long subterranean avenues leading up to the temple. The masonry of the south-west angle is even finer than that of the south-east. At present the angle rises ninety feet above the ground. Captain Warren, with great labour and at no little risk, sank a shaft, and discovered the foundation laid upon the rock, at the enormous

depth of one hundred feet. The grandeur of this angle almost surpasses conception. The corner-stones are colossal, measuring from twenty feet to forty feet in length, by about six feet in height. One stone, which I myself measured, and which is placed one hundred and ten feet above the foundation, is thirty-four feet long, and weighs above one hundred tons! It was near this angle the bridge stood which spanned the Tyropœon, connecting the temple with the palace. The remains have been discovered. The following measurements will give some idea of its stupendous size and grandeur:—The spring-stones of one of its arches are twenty-four feet long by six feet thick. The breadth of the road-way was fifty feet, corresponding exactly to the central avenue of the royal porch. The span of each arch was forty-six feet. The height above the bottom of the Tyropœon was two hundred and twenty-five feet.”

The above statements confirm the account of Josephus where he says, “The foundations were of costly stones, even of great stones of ten cubits! They surround Moriah, from the base, with a triple wall, and accomplished a work which surpassed all conception. The sustaining wall of the lower court was built up from the depth of 300 cubits (450 feet), and in some places more. There were stones used in this building which measured forty cubits.” The sacred superstructure throughout corresponded with its amazing foundations.

As to the civil and social condition of the population, the reader may judge after looking over the preceding chapter. The number of its inhabitants, as estimated

by Tacitus, at the time the siege commenced, was 600,000. This historian doubtless obtained his information from the Roman records. At the time of the passover, when Cestius, the Roman governor, visited Judea, he made a computation in order to prove to Nero the value and population of the Jewish province, when, it is said, there were at least 3,000,000 persons in Jerusalem. There must, we think, be something erroneous in this calculation, or otherwise the account needs qualifying. For we do not see it possible for so many human beings to live, say nothing about social accommodation, within the walls of the city. If so many persons were present at the passover, they were either not all present at the same time, or many of them made booths for their accommodation outside the city walls, and went to the temple in courses. But supposing we take the number as stated by the Roman historian, 600,000, as the regular number, or settled population of the city, they were immense to live in such a small compass, an area of only four miles in circumference; quite a sufficient number to be comfortable in time of peace under the best sanitary regulations. But for a considerable time previous to the siege the city had been little better than a human slaughter-house. Every street, and the floor of almost every dwelling-house, was stained with blood; tens of thousands had been slain by the contending parties, and all domestic comforts must have been greatly neglected. And even after the siege commenced the seditious parties still indulged in their bloody conflicts, for it was

not until the city was actually assaulted that John and Simon united with Eleazar to oppose the common enemy. Their united forces amounted to about 23,000 men, all of whom were at last engaged in defending the city against the Romans. The condition therefore of the besieged must have been most miserable both before and after the Romans commenced their operations to take the city, or compel a surrender.

In reference to the Roman army, it consisted in its vast aggregate of 60,000 warriors, composed of the Roman legions and their various auxiliaries from Syria and the dominions of Agrippa. These formed an encampment round the city, more especially towards the north, whence they had a splendid view of the city and temple. From this point they divided in the following order:—Five legions were posted at Scopus, another legion was in the rear; the fourth division, which advanced from Jericho, was stationed on the Mount of Olives, which lay on the east of the city, and was separated only by the valley of Cedron (or Kidron). The city, we are informed, was at that time crowded with inhabitants, who had assembled from all parts to celebrate the Passover. Hence the whole nation, to use a hyperbole, seemed to be collected within its walls, as if imprisoned by divine justice to wait the infliction of their pending doom.

Owing to the pause of twelve months, which had taken place after the conquests of the cities in the provinces, the army of Titus was fresh, and in good condition for the great undertaking in which they were about to engage. Vespasian had been proclaimed emperor,

occasioned by the death of Nero, and the sudden removal of his two successors, Galba and Otho, and therefore to Titus, his son, was committed the supreme command of the army. This prince approached the city with an advanced guard of 600 of his cavalry to reconnoitre its fortifications, when he was soon convinced of the readiness of the imprisoned Jews to commence hostilities, for he had no sooner made his appearance than a multitude of armed men boldly sallied from the city, and fell upon his feeble squadron with tremendous fury, and Titus himself only escaped by performing prodigies of valour. It appears that Titus at this time so admired the grandeur of the city, and the transcendent beauty of the temple, that he felt desirous to subdue the Jews, and take the city, if possible, without destroying the buildings. His object was conquest, and not spoliation, plunder, and destruction, further than the Roman regulations absolutely required in such cases. He therefore, in the first instance, adopted the plan of a regular siege, on a most stupendous and terrific scale, amounting to a blockade, thinking that when the besieged were so reduced as not to be able to make much resistance, he would make the assault, and storm their garrisons. This we think may be gathered from the details of the historian who was present on the occasion.

What a complicated picture of scenographic grandeur would be presented to the eye of the beholder at this period of the warfare. There were the Roman legions, in their blazing panoply, standing in battle

array before the strongly fortified city, surrounded with its treble walls, adorned with 190 lofty towers, and a countless number of battlements and turrets. These fortifications were garrisoned with a host of Jewish warriors, all resolved, like the valiant Spartans, either to conquer or die. And round this battle field, in the distance, stood the everlasting mountains "round about Jerusalem," like majestic witnesses to the catastrophe which was about to take place.

To take this city required all the skill, deliberative prudence, and unquenchable valour which Titus and his invincible army possessed. But those who have read and believe divine prophecy, and especially what was foretold by the Saviour, are prepared to hear the result of the operations about to take place. The infatuated Jews had now filled up the measure of their iniquities, and been even more wicked than their fathers who were destroyed by the king of Babylon. They had stupidly turned a deaf ear to every warning, admonition, and reproof. They had impiously rejected their only Saviour, and killed the Prince of Life and Glory. They had brought upon themselves the vengeance of the Romans, and the wrath of Almighty God. Their house was now left unto them desolate—forsaken of God and of Christ. They could no longer claim the mountains for their protection, or Jehovah for their defence. They had only to fight, bleed, and die; and beyond this to appear before God whom they had so daringly insulted, and grossly dishonoured. Their once beautiful and joyous city must now be

trodden under foot by the Gentiles, and the temple, which for ages had been the pride and glory of their nation, must be thrown down, in blazing ruins, “so that one stone shall not be left upon another.” They had already tasted the bitter cup of divine wrath, and now they must drink its very dregs, wrung out by the hand of God’s vengeance. It is rather difficult to give an abridged account of the operations of this terrible siege, so as to furnish the reader with clear and comprehensive ideas, but aided by others who have written on the subject, we will do our best.





CHAPTER XXXV.

The Siege of Jerusalem—First Series of Attacks.

The commencement of the siege—The method of defence—Furious attack of the Jews upon the besiegers—Sudden fall of a Roman tower—Great tumult among the legions—The powerful battering rams and the Roman archers—The Romans gain possession of the outer wall of the city—The factious parties unite—The delusive conduct of the Jews—Titus breaches the wall and enters the city with a thousand of his chosen troops, but is driven back—Remarks on the foundations of the walls—The brilliant military display made by Titus to convince the Jews of his power.



EARLY in the year 70 A.D. Titus, after he had carefully surveyed the city, and finding the north-west to be the most vulnerable point and easy of access, determined to attack it in that part. In this he followed the example of Pompey, who took the city one hundred and seven years before. He commenced his operations by throwing great stones, about sixty pounds weight, impelled by the force of large engines called catapults; these were mounted on platforms, so as to give them a proper elevation for effectual

execution. With these instruments they could also throw darts and arrows so as to do terrible execution at a great distance. These being set to work, a number of archers were placed in the rear of the machines, and the large battering rams were brought forward to beat down the wall. The heavy blows of these powerful engines, and the active manner in which the Romans carried on their other operations, alarmed the Jews, and induced the contending parties to unite their forces to oppose the besiegers; accordingly, from thence, John and Simon co-operated in the defence of the city. John and his forces came out of the temple to the assistance of Simon, and both parties unitedly defended the walls. They now found a use for the engines which they had taken from Cestius in the first outbreak of the war. These they mounted on the walls, and worked them with astonishing effort and effect, under the cover of which they frequently sallied forth, slaughtered their enemies, and fired their engines. Having ceased in these bold adventures for a few days the Romans concluded that they were discouraged and dare not venture a repetition of these daring exploits. In this the Romans were mistaken, for when they had slackened their offensive operations, a number of Jews unexpectedly rushed from a concealed gate, near the tower of Hippicus, with an intention to set fire to the Roman fortifications and destroy their engines. On this occasion the Jews fought like madmen, and bore down all before them, until Titus stopped their destructive progress with a troop of horse. Josephus says, "Cæsar himself

slew twelve of those who were in the forefront of the Jews," and when they saw this the multitude gave way, fled to the city, and made their escape; only one was taken prisoner. Titus ordered this prisoner to be crucified in the sight of the Jews, that this apparent severity might frighten them and check their obstinacy. In this skirmish the commander of the Idumeans was mortally wounded, with a dart shot by an Arab, and died immediately. We may just notice that the Jewish historian frequently gives Titus the appellation of Cæsar, and sometimes he calls him "the king." This perhaps was to flatter Titus, as well as to flatter himself in honour of his own prediction, for he had foretold, as we have already noticed, that Titus, as well as Vespasian, should be Cæsar.

The first night after this combat one of the Roman towers suddenly fell of its own accord, and as this took place about midnight, the noise caused much disturbance and tumult among the legions, as no one could tell how it happened, the general impression being that the Jews had invaded the camp. This was one of the three towers erected by Titus, on which were placed his light engines employed for throwing darts, with companies of archers and slingers. These towers were of considerable magnitude, and covered with plates of iron, that they might not be fired. From them the Romans threw their deadly missiles upon their enemies with such violence that the Jews could not stand to their posts, so that those who worked the battering rams could prosecute their destructive operations unmolested. These

particulars will convey to the mind of the reader an idea of this feature of warfare in ancient times, before the invention of gunpowder. The taking of a city by siege and assault at that time was very different from what it is now. The Romans, however, by the use of the above-mentioned means, at length breached the outer wall, and took possession of the suburb, where Titus immediately formed his camp. This very likely was the same plot of ground on which the Assyrian army encamped under the command of Rabshakeh, when that general laid siege to the city in the days of Hezekiah. But how marvellously different the two events. With Hezekiah was the Lord his God, who in answer to prayer sent a blast over the Assyrian camp, and slew 185,000 in one night, so that the few who remained alive were glad to retreat without shooting an arrow. Not so with the Romans; they were permitted, if not assisted by the Almighty, to prosecute the work of destruction until the city was reduced to a heap of ruins, and its inhabitants numbered with the dead.

The Jews, who retreated within the second wall, continued to defend the city with increasing determination. The two parties had become one, and unitedly opposed the Romans. It was agreed that John, with his adherents, should defend the tower of Antonia, and the northern side of the temple; and that Simon should guard the wall and cover the lower city. However we may disapprove of the character and general conduct of these two seditious leaders, it must be admitted that

they were men of undaunted valour and astonishing fortitude. Very few among the renowned Romans could be found to surpass them in genuine heroism and fearless determination. These two chief captains not merely commanded their forces, but by example inspired their men with courage and perseverance, even under the most pressing and discouraging circumstances.

The Romans first attacked that part which was defended by Simon, who fought them so desperately that they could not gain possession of his post. The Jews were valiant, and they were not the less hypocritical and delusive in their conduct and methods of deceiving the Romans. On several occasions they imposed upon the mercy and credulity of Titus in order to obtain respite, or some other kind of advantage, by condescending to the most artful tricks, as a circumstance connected with part of the siege will show. Titus brought one of his engines to the middle tower of the north wall, where a crafty Jew, named Castor, and ten others of the same disposition lay in ambush. When the tower was shaken by the battering-ram Castor rose and spread out his hands, as a petitioner, and called for Titus, of whom he begged for mercy. Titus, believing he was in earnest, and hoping the Jews would now surrender, stopped the working of the battering-ram, and forbade his men to shoot at the petitioner. Castor promised to come down, if Titus would give him his hand for security. To this the generous commander of the Romans complied, and expressed his willingness and pleasure to give security to

the city ; when five out of the ten professed to dissemble and declared they would rather die than become slaves to the Romans. By this artifice, and professed quarrel among themselves, they kept the Romans in suspense. In the meantime Castor sent to Simon, to consult what would be best to do, promising to elude the power of the Romans by protracting this sham parley with his party. Those who refused to submit acted their part very dexterously, by professing to be very angry and desperate. At length they brandished their naked swords upon their breastplates, struck themselves with such apparent violence as if they were actually killing themselves, and then fell down as though they had been slain. Titus, not being able to see into this trickery, admired their fortitude and pitied their calamity. While this was going on Castor acted his part. He called to the Romans, and urgently requested that some one might be sent to receive the money which he had with him. Josephus, who understood his own countrymen better than Titus, suspected some deception in the case, and consequently refused to go, but a man named Æneas, a deserter, said he would go : when he came near to the tower Castor threw a great stone at him. Titus was then convinced that it was all delusion, so he caused the engine to work more strongly than before, being angry at such deceitful practices. But the whole of their delusion was not yet accomplished. Castor set fire to the tower, and when it began to give way they all leaped into the flames, to make the Romans believe they were men of great courage, and

would rather die than submit to their enemies. But this leaping into the fire was a delusion, for underneath the flames, which were not violent, was a vault to receive them, so they all escaped, through a subterranean passage, unhurt. In the performance of this piece of trickery they had a twofold design, viz., to delay the operations of the Romans, and to impress their minds with an idea of no surrender.

After Titus had made a breach in the wall, he entered with a thousand of his chosen troops, but feeling desirous to spare the city and the lives of the inhabitants he gave orders that none should be killed, and that none of their houses should be destroyed. His forbearance was duly appreciated by the sufferers, who longed to be delivered from the tyranny of their oppressive rulers. But the Zealots were still unyielding, and boldly demonstrated their determination to resist the invaders, and drive the Romans out of the city. They furiously attacked them in the narrow streets, while others from the tops of their houses assailed them with stones and darts; at the same time an enraged body rushed to the gates and forced the guards to leave their posts, so that Titus was compelled, being surrounded by the enemy, and having with him but few men, to retreat the best way he could to his camp. In this attack he lost a number of his bravest troops, some of whom were killed and others taken captive, while he gained nothing. The Jews having thus defeated a select body of the Roman troops, with the chief commander at their head, became exceedingly elated, and vainly calculated on their ulti-

mate conquest over the besieging army. Well might Josephus say, "God blinded them, as a punishment for their sins." Had they have been prudent men, they would not have been transported with joy at this momentary success, while the irresistible enemy was still in sight, and with his overpowering military force encompassed the city on every side, and while thousands of their population were dying daily of famine and pestilence. Their triumph only continued for three days, when they were again overpowered by the Romans, who not only made a breach in the second wall, but threw a considerable part of it down, and garrisoned the towers and remaining portions with their troops. The Romans had now possession of the outer parts of the city, viz., those portions which lay between the first and the third walls, and the Jews were necessarily confined within the original wall of the city; which Josephus says "was hard to be taken by reason of the valleys and hills on which it was built," and beside that great advantage, "it was also built very strong, because David and Solomon and the following kings were very zealous about the work." From this it appears that Josephus regarded this to be the same wall as was built by the ancient kings of Judah, before the Babylonish captivity. This however we think is questionable. The foundations might be the same, but the wall itself must have been nearly all rebuilt by Nehemiah (Neh. xi. 13.): "I went by night and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were *broken down*, and the gates thereof were confused with fire." From this it appears that when the Jews returned from

their captivity, they found the walls of the city in ruins, yet sufficient remained to preserve their identity: and on the old foundations Nehemiah erected a new wall, and fortifications. These walls had been dismantled, and at times seriously injured by the Syrians and Romans; but they had been so often repaired, and up to the time of this dreadful siege kept in good repair, so that what was called the inner wall formed a strong fortification for the inner part of the city and temple.

Titus very truly calculated that to take the city by violence, thus defended and garrisoned by men who had given such proof of their valour and inflexible determination never to submit to their enemies, could not be done without great loss of human life and immense destruction of property; and he wished for neither of these things. His heart already sickened at the amount of misery he had been obliged to witness. He therefore had recourse to a measure which he thought might induce them to considerations of submission, and at the same time give some rest and gratification to his wearied troops. He resolved on making a brilliant military display in view of the city, by which means he would exhibit and deliberately demonstrate his numerical strength, and the matchless power of his army. So he gave orders that the commanders should put the army in martial array, in the sight of the city, by which movement he would exhibit the numerical strength and power of his army: "So he gave orders that the commanders should put the array in the face of the enemy,

and then gave every one of the soldiers his pay." The legionaries uncovered their glittering arms, the cavalry dismounted and led their chargers, decorated with ornamental trappings; and in this imposing manner the whole army marched in view of the city. They were four days in thus slowly defiling before their commander.

The old wall was covered with spectators to witness the pomp and splendour of this magnificent scene; and no doubt that many would be filled with consternation at the thoughts of being besieged by an enemy so potent and numerous. Now this display of military power, on the part of Titus, was really an act of condescension and clemency, rather than of pride and ambition, as some might suppose. It was to induce the besieged to submission, rather than to give battle to an enemy with whom they were evidently unable to contend; and had they then have yielded he was disposed to treat them mercifully. And certainly this exhibition was sufficient to convince even the most blinded Zealots that Titus had not only them imprisoned, but that he also held the key which locked them up in security. An army so numerous and so powerful in arms, supported by the Roman empire, which could at its imperial command draw supplies from the whole civilized world, could, without even drawing the sword, or shooting an arrow, save in defence, have formed and continued a blockade, until the last morsel of food had been consumed, and the last man in the city expired for want. But the Zealots, either through fear of being punished with death, or through judicial blindness, continued to

hold out, and ran the venture of whatever might follow. They could not have any hopes of being relieved, or supplied from any foreign or outward source, but it is possible they might, notwithstanding their unutterable wickedness, think God would eventually interpose on their behalf, and for his name's sake, and for the sake of their pious ancestors, spare the city ; but God had left them to perish in their sins and rebellion. They had suffered much and lost much during the series of attacks already made upon the city, but still greater miseries awaited them.





CHAPTER XXXVI.

Siege of Jerusalem—Second Series of Attacks.



Second series of attacks on the city—The plan of Titus to reduce the city—Josephus appointed to expostulate with the Jews—His address excites the indignation of the Zealots—Many Jews leave the city, and are allowed to go into the country—Famine and great distress in the city—Many of the Jews crucified in the sight of their countrymen—Arrival of the Macedonian army, under the command of Antiochus Epiphanes—Failure of their attempt to carry an assault—The Macedonian band nearly all slain—The Roman engines undermined by the Jews—A terrible sortie made by Simon—Titus calls a council to determine on future plans of operation—The city encompassed on every side by circumvallation—The miserable condition of the city—The cruelty of Simon towards his fellow citizens—The barbarous conduct of the Arabs and Syrian soldiers towards the Jews who left the city—The sacrilege of John of Gischala—700,000 dead bodies in the city—Renewed attempts to breach the walls defeated by John.



TITUS, seeing no signs of submission, resumed his preparations to prosecute the siege and reduce the city; on which he found John and Simon at their former posts, and as determined as ever

on resistance; the former in the temple, and the latter defending the fortifications of the upper city. Titus, weary of destruction and misery, and unwilling to either storm the city by his overwhelming forces, or to annihilate its population by a continued blockade, employed Josephus to reason with them, and if possible induce them to yield. It is said that, "Titus on this occasion made an unfortunate choice in selecting Josephus for this purpose, seeing the Jews regarded him as an apostate and an enemy to their country." But, all things considered, he was perhaps the most likely man, for this purpose, of any in the Roman camp; for whoever had gone they would have regarded him as an enemy to their country, and with regard to qualification, none could be more suitable than Josephus, as he perfectly understood the Jewish language, and had a better knowledge of the men to whom the address had to be delivered than any other person whom Titus might have selected. Be this as it may, he failed to succeed in bringing the Jews to submission. After making a long speech, during which he was frequently interrupted and abused, he returned without making any favourable impression, and with a firm conviction that God had given them up to delusion and destruction. On this occasion Josephus made, on the whole, an admirable speech, with the exception of what he says respecting Pharaoh sending "a prodigious army of soldiers to seize queen Sarah," and Abraham having an "immense army commanded by 318 captains." It is difficult to say from what source he obtained this in-

formation. It certainly does not agree with the account in the Bible, neither are such statements found in his own history of Abraham and his time (see Ant. b. i. ch. x. s. 1.)

Though the address of Josephus excited the indignation of the obdurate Zealots, many others were influenced thereby to leave the city and flee to the Roman camp. These Titus allowed to go into the country without inflicting on them any kind of punishment. Happy for those who thus escaped the future miseries which awaited such as remained in the city. As no supplies could be obtained from any quarter the provisions of the city were daily getting less, at length a general famine prevailed. This distracting condition led to plunder, madness, and murder, and the city was filled with the dead and the dying. Social order, and civil regulations were all disregarded, and nothing but death relieved the wretched inhabitants of their complicated sorrows. The city, like Ezekiel's roll, within and without, exhibited nothing but mourning, lamentation and woe; for the patience of Titus being exhausted, he determened to make a terrible example of the remaining Jews who fell into his hands, he therefore commanded that all who came out of the city in search of food should be taken and crucified every morning in sight of the besieged. As many as four or five hundred were seen at once hanging on crosses in the agonies of death. These crucifixions at length became so numerous that sufficient wood could not be found for the purpose, when orders were given, that in-

stead of crucifying them their hands should be cut off, and in this maimed condition sent back to the city. This barbarous treatment, like other kindred expedients, failed to produce submission; neither kindness nor severity induced the besieged to surrender. While we admire the clemency of Titus, we can neither justify nor vindicate his barbarity. At this stage of the siege the Romans received a reinforcement. Antiochus Epiphanes, King of Cammagene, arrived with his "Macedonian army," (so called because they had learned the Macedonian's discipline and art of warfare.) This prince, who was a very gigantic, powerful man and a great warrior, expressed his astonishment that the Roman general had not gained possession of the city by an assault. Titus, who knew the strength of its fortifications, and the desperate heroism of the Jews, with a smile told him to make the trial with his soldiers. Antiochus arranged his forces, which consisted of a band of young, powerful, and active men, who no doubt would pride themselves in giving a demonstration of their superior prowess and discipline. This valiant band, under the command of their king, made a sudden assault upon the wall, expecting to astonish the Romans with immediate success. The Jews were prepared to meet them, and the parties closed in battle. Antiochus fought well and hard, but his young men continued to fall either dead or severely wounded until he was obliged to retreat to the Roman camp. Thus ended the exploits of the Cammagenian heroes, for we hear no more of "the Macedonian Band."

The last effort which Titus made to assault the city, before having recourse to those great measures, which were sure eventually to prove successful, was to raise four banks on which to place battering engines—two against Fort Antonia and two against the upper city. What Josephus calls banks would be large platforms; these were executed by four legions, after the labour of seventeen days. While the Romans were erecting these elevations and engines, John and his men were busy at work underground, for they undermined the space on which the tower and platforms were erected, and filled up the mine with combustible materials, which, as soon as the engines were ready for operation, were fired. The flames soon burnt the beams of timber which had been underlaid to support the platforms, when all came down with a tremendous crash, and were instantly enveloped in an inextinguishable conflagration. Simon was not to be outdone by John. He had not undermined the site on which the destructive engines were placed, but, as if conscious of having neglected his duty in this respect, he resolved to make amends by his bravery and desperation. He rushed out at the head of a band of the most fearless and resolute men, openly set fire to the engines, ran upon the Romans without fear or hesitation, when a most terrible battle ensued; and it was not until Titus arrived with some of his men that the Jews were overpowered and obliged to retreat within the walls.

Titus now lost all hopes of any ordinary means succeeding; he therefore called a council to deliberate as

to the best method of further operations. Some of his generals were for immediately storming the city, with the whole force of the army. This no doubt could have been effected ; but such was the valour and the determination of the besieged, that it would have been attended with a fearful amount of slaughter, which Titus was reluctant to witness. Others suggested a renewal of the attempt which had been made, with precautionary measures, but John and Simon had become so ingenious and skilful in their plans and execution of their destructive schemes, that success on the part of the Romans, whatever precautions they took, was very uncertain. Others were for compelling a surrender by regular comprehensive blockade, and thereby reducing them by famine and its consequent evils. This method might, and certainly would have succeeded, but it would have taken a long time, for as John and Simon had lost all sympathy for the people, and were inflexibly set on resistance, so long as they could obtain even a scanty supply of food for themselves and a garrison to sustain a defence, there was no prospect of their yielding ; and Titus was desirous of making short work of it, as he wished to return to Rome, to share the honours which there awaited him. Therefore, after eliciting these various opinions, he resolved to form a blockade so as to completely cut off all supplies, by any means whatever, and at the same time continue his attacks in the most formidable way possible, so that the besieged might be compelled to surrender by the miseries of famine and the force of arms. The council unanimously agreed in adopting the

plans of their sagacious and skilful commander, and commenced to make a trench “to compass the city on every side;” also a wall was built of about four and a half miles in circumference, flanked on the outside with thirteen towers or forts. The whole of this circumvallation was completed by the united labours of the Roman army in the short period of three days,—a striking proof that a great work can be accomplished by the united skill and labour of a multitude, all working under good discipline and commanding authority.

The miseries of the city continued to increase, famine had reached almost every family, and every street was crowded with the dead or the dying. Such as remained alive were roaming about the streets in a most pitiable condition, and were constantly dropping down exhausted for want of food. “The dreadful silence of despair universally prevailed, no sound was heard, the power of speech was destroyed by destitution of support, and the awful stilness was only broken by the brutal exclamations of the soldiers as they burst open the habitations of the dead to carry away their plunder; or, as in savage merriment, they insulted the agonies of the expiring, and even plunged their swords into the corpses, from whom they tore away the decencies of clothing.” So numerous were the dead that their bodies could not be interred in the common way, but either lay exposed, or were concealed in the dwelling-houses of the living; in consequence of which a pestilence broke out, and the living were obliged to throw the corpses over the walls of the city, lest the whole inhabitants should be destroyed

by pestilential exhalation : and the city became one vast sepulchre. Titus one day, passing along the outside of the walls, was so sickened with the offensive stench emanating from the immense heaps of putrified bodies, that he lifted up his hands to heaven, and called the gods to witness that he was not the guilty cause of such inhuman horrors. All this complicated misery failed to soften the obdurate hearts of John and Simon, but rather enraged them to perpetrate more revolting acts of cruelty. It was about this time that Simon accused Matthias, the high priest, of holding secret communication with the Romans, and barbarously condemned him and his four sons to die for the supposed offence ; but one of them had the good fortune to escape, and fled to the Roman camp. Seventeen members of the Sanhedrim were also put to death for being suspected of disaffection towards the two reigning tyrants, and many persons of rank shared the same fate. (Wars. b. v., c. xiii.)

This matchless tyranny produced great dissatisfaction, and created great fear among the inhabitants, not knowing who might be next seized upon and fall victims to the rage of these demagogues ; in consequence of which many made their escape out of the city and went to the Romans ; but here a most dreadful fate awaited them. Some who deserted out of the city had swallowed pieces of gold, and this being detected by one of the Syrian soldiers, and the news having spread through the camp with an exaggeration that the deserters had come *full of gold*, the Arabians and Syrians cut open the bodies

of the Jews for the sake of obtaining the money which they hoped to find in their entrails. In one night about two thousand of these Jewish deserters fell victims to this kind of horrible dissection. Though Titus strictly prohibited a repetition of this barbarous practice, on pain of death, the love of money was so vehement, that the crime, in some cases, was still secretly committed.

Crime, pestilence, and death, still raged in the city. John, in addition to his former crimes, betook himself to sacrilege, by melting down many of the sacred utensils; and began to drink the wine and oil which the priests kept to be poured on the burnt offerings, portions of which he distributed amongst his adherents. Josephus seems to be so horrified at this conduct that he denounced them as worse than Atheists: "I suppose that had the Romans made any longer delay in coming against these villains, the city would either have been swallowed up by the ground opening upon them, or been overflowed with water, or else been destroyed by such thunder as the country of Sodom perished by; for it had brought forth a generation of men much more Atheistical than were those that suffered such punishment; for by their madness it was that all the people came to be destroyed." Death prevailed to such an awful extent, that in eight days during the siege 115,880 dead bodies were carried out at one gate, and the almost incredible number of 600,000 persons had expired in the city. Many of these dead bodies were piled up in empty houses, and there left to putrify and decay. All this, however, failed to humble the seditious parties;

they still resolved to give battle to the enemy. But when they mustered to sally out of the city, they were greatly hindered by the heaps of dead bodies, and the unsufferable stench which proceeded therefrom. They nevertheless marched over them in the most brutal manner to be avenged of their enemies.

Titus seeing their determination still to fight, adopted more active measures to reduce the city. He ordered the battering rams again to be brought against port Antonia, and the unquenchable valour of the defenders was not able to repel the attack. But when the Romans advanced, expecting immediately to possess the city, to their dismay they found a wall built within the other wall; so they became dispirited and recoiled from the peril of an assault. Thus again the valour and skill of John of Gischala defeated the attempts of the Roman heroes, and thus ended the second series of attacks.





CHAPTER XXXVII.

Jerusalem taken and destroyed by the Romans.

The address which Titus gave to his dispirited army—Heathenism contrasted with Christianity—The heroic conduct of Sabinus the Syrian—The city taken in the dead of the night—The temple still defended—Terrible fight, “hand to hand”—The Romans compelled again to retreat—The reverence which Titus had for the God of the Hebrews—His reluctance to defile the temple—Remarks on Sulpicius and Tacitus who contradict Josephus—The plan adopted by Titus to storm the temple—The Jews fought desperately with the storming party five hours—A drawn battle—Another plan to take the temple—A daring exploit—A destructive stratagem of the Jews—The Romans gain possession of the outer court—Terrible stories—The reflections of Titus—The Jews again beat back the Romans—Another storming party formed—A council held respecting the destruction of the temple—The whole Roman army brought forward to support the storming party—Another dreadful fight—Titus enters the holy house—A Roman soldier sets fire to the temple—A dreadful scene—Prodigies spoken of by Josephus.



IN the Roman soldiers becoming discouraged, as stated at the close of the last chapter, Titus made a speech, in which he strongly exhorted his men to be courageous. He admitted that it was a

difficult task to go up and storm the new wall, but urged them to manfully struggle with the difficulty, and said what a brave thing it was to die with glory, and that those who made the first attempt should not go unrewarded; and in order to arouse their valour he referred to the constancy and patience of the besieged, under their ill successes, as being worthy of imitation. He then speaks of God as being on their side, and who will receive the souls of those who are slain in the midst of their martial bravery into immortal glory; while those who die otherwise, in time of peace, are condemned to the grave, together with their bodies. Here we have a revelation of the notions held by these Roman heroes, if not by their philosophers, in reference to the happy state of those who die bravely in war, and the condition of those who die ignobly on their beds of ease. He again exhorted them to "pull up their courage and set about the work," by their mutual efforts, and expressed his confidence in their ultimate success: "With your bravery you will soon break the hearts of your enemies, they will not be able to sustain your efforts any longer. As for that person who first mounts the walls, I shall blush for shame if I do not make him to be the envy of others by those rewards I will bestow upon him; if such an one escapes with his life, he shall have the command of others that are now but his equals." This was certainly most encouraging and inspiring language to come from the lips of their chief commander; but the danger was so great that not a Roman, out of the numerous legions, came forward to volunteer his services and

hazard his life for a prospect of future promotion, or, we may rather say, to sacrifice his life for the vain hope of immortal glory. Thousands and millions of Christians have evinced more moral courage in honour of their King and their religion than could be found in the ranks of these renowned Roman legionaries. The dying Christian knows that the Great Captain of his salvation has secured for him immortal honour and unfading glory, which he shall, if faithful, eternally inherit after the sufferings of martyrdom, or the loss of life occasioned by the discharge of his duty; he therefore counts not his life dear to himself if death be the medium through which he shall obtain a "crown of life which fadeth not away." Titus was a great prince and a noble hero, but how little does he appear when compared with King Messiah, who gave his life to save his followers; and how cowardly were the Roman heroes compared with some of the prophets and apostles, and a host of Christian champions, who have confronted all the powers of earth and hell, and willingly died in the cause of their Divine Commander-in-chief.

There was, however, in the Roman army a man who volunteered to make this daring attempt. He was a Syrian by birth, whose name was Sabinus. A man of dark complexion, weakly constitution, and very thin, altogether unsoldier-like in appearance, but a man of great spirit, and well skilled in the use of arms. Eleven others followed this man. Under a shower of darts, this little band approached the walls. Sabinus, who covered his head with his shield to ward off the darts, got on

the top of the wall, whence he fell down headlong, but still managed to cover himself with his shield: and when the Jews came near to him he defended himself with his sword, and slew several of them, but was soon mortally wounded and gave up the ghost. In reference to his companions in this daring exploit, three were killed, and eight carried back to the camp severely wounded.

The next attempt to get possession of the city was made in the night, by a standard bearer of the fourth legion, two troopers, and a trumpeter, only four in number. These went silently, about three o'clock in the morning, through the ruins of fort Antonia, where they killed the first guard, who were asleep, they then took possession of the wall, and ordered the trumpeter to give the signal blast; which, when Titus heard, immediately put his army in motion. The Jews on guard, supposing the assault had been made by a great number, fled into the temple, and some of them fell into the mine which had been dug by John, to let down the Roman engines. The forces of John and Simon now united to defend the temple, which they regarded as their stronghold; and the Romans looked upon the possession of the temple as their complete conquest. So both parties fought desperately, in close quarters, with swords only, hand to hand. By reason of their confined position the soldiers became intermixed and confounded, and for a time the scene was one of indiscriminate slaughter. At length the Romans were obliged to retreat, after ten hours' close combat. A more sanguinary conflict was scarcely ever witnessed. In the account

given by Josephus of this "battle of the temple," he relates the terrific exploits of one Julian, a centurion, a native of Bethynia, who was wonderfully strong in body and of a most courageous mind. He stood by Titus at the tower of Antonia, and on witnessing the defeat of the Romans, he became so inflated with rage that he leaped out suddenly, and gave such a terrible display of his power and dexterity that the Jews became awfully alarmed; "Of himself, he put the Jews to flight, when they were already conquerors, and made them retire to the far corner of the inner court of the temple; from him the multitude fled away in crowds, supposing that neither his strength nor his violent attacks could be those of a mere man; accordingly he rushed through the midst of the Jews as they were dispersing all abroad, and killed those that he caught." But his shoes being full of nails, he slipped down on the marble pavement, when the Jews turned on him in crowds, and struck him with swords and spears; these strokes he received on his shield, and continued to stab his enemies with his sword; at length he was mortally wounded. The Jews carried off his dead body, and again put the Romans to flight. This victory was but temporary. The Romans had only retreated to the tower of Antonia, which they held in possession, and Titus made a way to bring up his army to the assault. But at this time Titus was informed that the daily sacrifice had failed, either through want of lambs, or want of men to offer the sacrifice, on which account he was led to pause in his operations; for though a heathen he had a reverence for the Deity, and a re-

spect for the Jewish religion and its ritual institutions. When he heard that the Jews were grievously troubled on account of the cessation of their daily sacrifice, he commanded Josephus to communicate his feelings to John, and to say that he had no desire to defile their temple or to offend God in causing a discontinuance of the sacrifices, and if John was determined to continue his hostilities, he advised him to come out of the city, and fight where there would be no danger of destroying the city and the temple.

Josephus delivered his message, but the malicious tyrant only reproached him with imprecations, set the Romans at defiance, and expressed his belief that God would defend the city, on which Josephus severely reproved him for his wickedness and religious mockery, and in conclusion affirmed, as his belief, that it was God who was bringing on the fire to purge the city and temple by means of the Romans, and that God was about to destroy the city, which was full of their own pollution. Titus however was evidently unwilling to be the instrument of inflicting divine vengeance; he therefore resolved on making another appeal to the sympathy and reason of John and Simon. He sent for the Jews who were at Gophna, and gave orders that they should go round the walls in company with Josephus, and use means with the seditious party to agree with his proposals, and spare the city and temple from any further destruction. This party, who pleaded with tears and groans, were treated also with bitter reproaches, and not only so, but the engines were set to work, and they were

driven off with darts, javelins, and stones. The seditious party moreover commenced a fight in the temple, and wantonly shed the blood of their own people: "They rushed upon the holy places in their armour, and proceeded to such great transgressions and cruelty one towards another, that even the Roman soldiers looked on with horror, and wished the robbers would repent before their miseries became incurable."

Titus was so deeply affected at this dreadful scene, that he personally addressed them, in the most severe language, for their God-insulting conduct, in profaning the temple, and concluded by saying, "I appeal to the gods of my country, and to every god that ever had regard for this place; I also appeal to my own army, and to those Jews that are now with me, and even to yourselves, that I do not force you to defile your sanctuary, and if you will but change your place whereon you will fight, no Roman shall either come near your sanctuary, or offer any affront to it; nay, I will endeavour to preserve you, your holy house, whether you will or not." That the seditious party of the Jews was the direct cause of the destruction of their city, and the conflagration of both temple and city, and that Titus was constantly desirous to save both, is very evident from the writings of Josephus, inasmuch as he frequently speaks to that effect; but we are aware that this has been disputed.

Sulpicius Severus says that Titus commanded that the temple should be destroyed. But on what authority does he make this statement? Dr. J. Berneys thinks

he gathered his information from Tacitus, who makes the same assertion. But on what authority does Tacitus make this statement? We think what the Jewish historian says respecting this subject is entitled to credit in preference to anything which Tacitus may say, for Josephus wrote his history at Rome about two years after the siege, under the immediate inspection of Titus and those who took part in the enterprise. Beside, we know from what is said of Titus, not only by Josephus, but by others, that he was a very generous prince, who took no delight in bloodshed and destruction. We are aware that from the period of the Jewish conquest, till the time Titus was made emperor, his moral conduct was anything but creditable, but while he was young, and till after the siege of Jerusalem, making allowance for his peculiar position, he uniformly conducted himself in the most moderate and consistent manner, as he also did after he was elevated to the throne.

Another fact worthy of consideration is that Tacitus was born in the reign of Nero, about the year 60 A.D., and consequently was but a little boy when Jerusalem was taken; but Josephus was in the Roman camp at the time, was often in council with Titus, and employed by him in negotiating with the Jews. He therefore knew the mind of Titus, was present when he gave his orders, and could not be mistaken on this subject. That there are some discrepancies and errors in *The History of the Jews*, by Josephus, no careful and critical reader will dispute, but none can justly charge him with wilful perversion, or of recording

palpable falsehoods. This subject we have considered at some length in a previous chapter. Now, if he knew that Titus commanded the temple to be destroyed, and yet repeatedly asserts that this was done contrary to his commands, and that its destruction was overruled by divine providence, he was guilty of recording deliberate and presumptuous untruths; this we think cannot be admitted. But on the other hand, Tacitus, without wilful perversion, might fall into error. He wrote simply as a historian and as a heathen, he might therefore overlook the judicial visitation of the God of the Hebrews; and as Titus commanded that the temple should be assaulted (but not destroyed), he might unintentionally fall into this error, not duly regarding the records of Josephus, who wrote before him. That Titus commanded the temple to be destroyed on his leaving the city, after it had been reduced to a heap of ruins, is correct. All things considered, I think we are bound to receive the statements of Josephus on this particular as genuine.

What Titus said to the seditious Jews in reference to his anxiety to save the temple, and his willingness to spare their lives on condition of their surrender, was regarded by them as indicative of his fear, and therefore they grew the more insolent towards him: on which he immediately proceeded to take the temple by storm. It was impossible, however, for him to bring the whole of his forces to such an attack, on account of the limited space which could be obtained for military operations: he therefore chose thirty valiant out of each hundred,

committed a thousand to each tribune, and made General Corealis the chief commander of the whole force, with instructions to make the first attack on the guards of the temple, about three o'clock in the morning. This appears to have been the time generally fixed upon for these assaults, as the guards would be more likely to be off their watch, or overcome with sleep, than at any other hour during the darkness of the night, as the sun never rose until about six o'clock, with very little dawn or twilight.

Titus took his station in the tower of Antonia, in a situation where he could command a view of his forces, and see how they acquitted themselves in this mortal conflict, and that his presence might animate his troops. According to arrangement and orders the Romans marched to the entrance of the temple, where they found the guards, not asleep as on the former occasion, but on the look-out and prepared to dispute the entrance of the enemy, so a hand to hand fight immediately ensued. The soldiers who were in the temple, hearing the alarm, rushed out upon their invaders in great numbers, intermixed with the Romans, and, being dark, they fought in great confusion, especially the Jews, who were not so well disciplined as the Romans. The Romans made their regular sallies, as intimated by their "watch-word," while the Jews fought furiously and more at random. At daylight each army was set in battle array, and fought systematically against each other for the space of about five hours, the Romans who were in Fort

Antonia looking on and encouraging their comrades to push the battle to a conquest. At the fifth hour of the day each army remained where the battle began without making each other retreat, when the conflict ended in a drawn battle, "for both the armies left the victory almost in uncertainty between them." The Romans retired to the tower of Antonia, and the Jews, being glad to have a little rest, did not pursue them. But Titus, who was getting impatient, did not give them much time for repose. During this battle, and for some time before, a portion of the Roman army had been employed in making a broad way through the fortress to the temple, through which a large engine could be brought to breach the fortifications of the sacred house. This was a work of great labour, and attended with many difficulties. To make the necessary platforms required a great deal of timber, which could not be readily obtained. Besides this, the Jews continued every opposition which they could imagine and carry into execution, and being sorely oppressed by famine, which urged them to desperation, they collected their forces and made a violent attack upon the Roman guards who were stationed on the Mount of Olives. On a certain day, a little before sunset, they commenced this onslaught, but the Romans, being apprised of their design, obtained assistance from the neighbouring camps and prepared to meet them. A short fight took place, on which occasion both parties displayed, in a most daring manner, their courage and skill, but the Jews being overpowered were obliged to retreat. It was on

this occasion that an heroic Roman trooper rode after the fugitive Jews and caught hold of a young man belonging to the Jewish army by his ankle, as he was running away, and carried him captive to Titus. At this display of strength and horsemanship the Roman general expressed his admiration.

After this skirmish the Romans betook themselves to assault the temple, with a determination to take it without any further delay, and the Jews being unable any longer to stand before them, having cut off all communication between the temple and Fort Antonia by destroying the north-west cloisters, they retired into the Holy House. The Romans then set fire to the cloister, which joined the other, so the tower of Antonia became completely separated from the temple. While this destruction was going on in the buildings the two armies continued to fight each other for mastery, without any regular order.

At this time a man named Jonathan, a person of no character and of mean appearance, went out from the Jewish ranks and challenged the best or any man in the Roman army to fight a single combat; but he was regarded by them as an insolent impudent fellow, and his challenge altogether unworthy of acceptance. But as he continued to reproach them, a horseman hastily rushed from the Romans to attack him, who had the ill fortune to fall down, when Jonathan ran upon him and killed him. He then stood upon his body, exulting over the dead man, and ridiculing the Romans. While he was leaping about in triumph, and defying the

enemy, a centurion shot him through with a dart. He writhed for a short time in mortal agony, and then expired upon the corpse of his victim.

The besiegers continued to gain ground, and were daily making their way to storm the temple, in spite of all the Jews could do, either by open opposition, or any other means to prevent them. As a check to their progress the Jews formed a stratagem which caused the destruction of many of their enemies. They filled the empty space between the beams and the roof of the western cloisters, which stood in the court of the Gentiles, with inflammatory combustibles, such as pitch, bitumen, and dry materials; and then made a false retreat, in apparent confusion, as though they were afraid of being taken. Many of the inconsiderate Romans, without waiting for command, rushed immediately after them, ascended the fatal roof, the Jews applied the torch, and the whole was soon enveloped in a conflagration. The Romans found out their mistake, but there was no way of escape, many were consumed with the flames, others plunged down and were maimed or killed, while others fell into the hands of their enemies. Josephus mentions several particular circumstances connected with this stratagem. We shall here record the substance of one of them, which we regard as being of the greatest importance, the others being merely tragical, from which nothing worth knowing can be learned.

There was a man named Artorius surrounded with fire, and seeing no possibility of escape, he called to one

of his fellow soldiers and said, "I leave thee heir of all I have if thou wilt come and receive me." From this it appears he was a man of property. His comrade came near to receive him. Artorius threw himself down upon him, and thereby saved his life; but the man on whom he fell was dashed to pieces, and died immediately. We have read of other similar cases, and therefore those who engage in such perilous, yet generous undertakings, should calculate on the probable consequence. The person on whom a body falls from a great elevation is almost certain to suffer very greatly, and the consequence is likely to be fatal.

Next day after this fire the Romans burnt the eastern cloisters, which formed the valley over the Cedron, and thereby laid open the frightful depths of the valley below. The reader may now picture to himself the state of the holy and glorious temple. The Romans had made their way into the inner court, many of the porticoes or cloisters were completely destroyed, fire and blood had polluted the sacred pavement, and the edifice itself was next in danger of being burnt, or otherwise destroyed. The Jews however still remained obdurate, while the Romans were as resolute as ever to carry the siege to a consummate conquest; and as to the condition of the people, every day a prodigious number died of famine and pestilence. On these subjects the Jewish historian relates some heart-rending accounts, especially the one which refers to a wealthy lady eating a part of the body of her own infant child, and offering the other part to the seditious

soldiers, on which even they were horrified, and went out of the room trembling. No doubt that the miserable woman, through starvation, and excessive grief and fear had lost, not only her natural feelings as a mother, but also the proper use of her reasoning faculties.

The condition of the city so shocked the moral feelings of Titus that, after excusing himself before God of not being the cause of it, he protested that men ought not to leave such a city upon the habitable earth, to be seen by the sun, where the conduct of fathers had been the cause of a mother eating her own child ; and as he saw no signs of repentance he resolved to make a speedy finish of the war, and proceeded accordingly. The banks for the engines being completed, the battering rams were brought against the wall of the western edifice of the inner temple, which by means of its thickness and solidity was proof for six days against the incessant beating of the powerful engines. While this battering was going on, the Romans were undermining the northern gate to make way for the legionary troops ; but in this they could not succeed, so they scaled the cloisters. This they were allowed to do without interruption, when the Jews fell upon them most furiously, some were violently thrown down, others slain with the sword ; in return the Romans made great slaughter among the Jews.

At length the Jews obtained possession of the engines, and the Romans again were obliged to retire, leaving some parts of the buildings on fire. The next day Titus commanded the fire to be extinguished, and a

way made for his legions, under the command of six generals, to take possession of the temple. A council was held, before the storming parties commenced operations, as to what should be done with the holy house, some thought it should be destroyed ; but Titus, who was still desirous to preserve it, determined otherwise, to which his officers agreed. Consequently a party was chosen to make their way through the ruins and extinguish the fire. When the assault was made, the Jews gave battle with great bravery, on which Titus brought forward a troop of horse to stop them, and so put the enemy to flight. The Jews, unwilling to be beaten, again and again sallied out upon the Romans, and kept up a fight of this kind for several hours ; after which they shut themselves up in the inner court of the temple. The next day, early in the morning, Titus brought the whole of his army to support the storming party (this was on the 10th day of Ab, or 8th of Sept.), on the same day of the year as it was burnt by the king of Babylon. The fatal period had now arrived, and the Jews could no longer offer any effectual resistance against their over-powering invaders. The temple was stormed, taken, and Titus entered the holy house itself. Josephus says, “at which time one of the soldiers, without staying for any orders, and without any concern or dread upon him, at so great an undertaking, and being hurried on by a certain divine fury, snatched somewhat out of the materials that were on the fire, and being lifted up by another soldier, he set fire to the golden window, through which there was a passage to the

rooms that were round about the holy house, on the north side of it." The Jews on seeing this were frantic, lost all control of self-preservation, and exposed themselves to danger without fear. On Titus being informed the temple was on fire, he made another effort to save it from final destruction, but all in vain ; for one greater than Titus had, on account of the wickedness of the Jews, decreed otherwise. The scene in the temple was now most terrific. The sacred edifice all in flames, dead bodies lying heaps on heaps in every direction, and the enraged victorious Romans were every moment adding to the number of the slain. Titus still had a lingering hope that the holy house might yet be saved from the devouring flames, he therefore made another attempt to persuade his men to quench the violence of the fire, and gave orders for Liberalius, a centurion of the spearmen, to beat back the refractory soldiers with their staves ; but the hatred they had towards the Jews overpowered the fear they had of Titus, and so they continued their work of destruction until all was totally ruined. The Romans enriched themselves with the spoils of the city and temple, in which there still remained great treasures, consisting of precious metals and other valuable materials. The booty of the conquerors was so immense that in Syria the price of gold fell one half.

Though the city was thus taken and spoiled, many had the infatuation to believe that God would yet interpose and save them, which gave rise to a dreadful scene of slaughter, chiefly of a multitude of unarmed persons, who had been induced by false prophets to re-

sort to the temple for refuge, under an expectation that God would deliver them by some miraculous power. Through this delusion 6,000 persons met with a most horrible death. While the temple was in flames they ascended the roof of one of the galleries which remained standing; the Romans set fire to it, and all there perished in the flames, save a few priests who took refuge on some remaining walls, and these were soon obliged to surrender, and were instantly led to execution.

According to the dates of Josephus, the temple was burnt 1130 years, seven months, and fifteen days after the original foundation was laid by Solomon, and 539 years and forty-five days after the foundation of Haggai, which was in the second year of the reign of Cyrus, king of Persia. We may also add eighty-seven years after it had been rebuilt by Herod the Great in the seventieth year of the vulgar era, and about thirty-seven years after the noteworthy prediction uttered by Christ, who, when looking on the splendour of the city and temple, foretold that there should not be left one stone upon another which should not be thrown down. We may here just notice, without dwelling on the subject, the prodigies mentioned by Josephus, which he regarded as foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem. It has been thought, however, by some writers, that these prodigies might be explained, apart from supernatural interference, partly from the heat of imagination, occasioned by the calamities under which the Jews were suffering, and partly in that love of the marvellous which is fond of exaggerating natural occurrences into signs and

wonders. On this subject we presume not to pronounce any settled opinion. It is worthy of notice, that when Christ mentioned the signs of his coming, in Matt. xxiv., which is generally understood to relate primarily to his coming to execute judgment upon the Jewish nation for rejecting him, he does not mention the signs recorded by the Jewish historian. He speaks of false prophets, wars and commotion, pestilence and famine, and of earthquakes, which may denote popular commotions. But St. Luke adds (ch. xxi. 11), “and dreadful signs, and great signs shall there be from heaven.” These signs from heaven may therefore refer to what is recorded by Josephus. The prodigies, which he believed to be supernatural, and denoting the destruction of the city, were—

1. Before the war broke out, a comet, in the form of a sword, appeared suspended in the heavens over the city.
2. At the feast of unleavened bread, about the ninth hour of the night, a great light shone about the altar and the temple, and continued for half-an-hour.
3. At the same feast, a cow being led to the sacrifice, brought forth a lamb in the midst of the temple.
4. The eastern gate of the temple, which was made of solid brass, and so heavy that it required twenty men to close it, and was fastened with strong bars, opened of its own accord.
5. Before sun setting there was seen over the country chariots and armies fighting in the clouds.
6. There was heard in the temple a voice, as of a multitude, saying, “*Let us depart hence.*” He also mentions one Jesus, who, four years before the war began, when the

city was in peace and plenty, went crying about the streets night and day, "A voice from the east! A voice from the west! A voice from the four winds! A voice from Jerusalem and the temple! A voice from the bridegrooms and the brides! A voice from all people!" And when he was punished for his so doing, he exclaimed with a mournful voice, "Woe, woe to Jerusalem!" And this he continued for several years together, going about the walls and crying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe to the city, woe, woe to the temple, and woe, woe to the people." And at last he added, "Woe, woe to myself!" when a stone slung from an engine struck him dead. Josephus declares he was witness to these things. And Tacitus, as well as many other historians of note, have deemed them worthy of recording. We read of similar signs appearing in the heavens over Jerusalem, a short time before the Syrian invasion, in which the city was partially destroyed.





CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The whole of Judea subdued—Conclusion.



The upper city—The speech of Titus to John and Simon—The seditious party again takes courage and fights the Romans—The upper city stormed—The Jews still resist—The number that perished in the siege—The captives taken—The last orders of Titus—The end of John and Simon—Herodium capitulated—Machærus taken—Masada besieged—The dreadful tragedy of Masada—Conclusion.

THE destruction of the lower city and the temple did not make the Romans absolute masters of Jerusalem, or put them in immediate possession of the whole city. The upper city was still held by John and Simon, who were supported with a strong military force. This upper city formed a very splendid and important part of Jerusalem, in which stood a gorgeous and beautiful palace of large dimensions, with every accommodation for a great number of people. It was surrounded with high and strong walls, and beside these there were three stupendous towers, so massive

and firmly built that Titus himself acknowledged they would have been for ever proof against the most powerful Roman engines.

The two tyrants finding themselves encompassed on every side, without any method of escape, sent word to Titus that they wished to treat with him. So Titus approached within hearing distance, and having charged his soldiers to refrain from any rage or hostilities, he addressed them through an interpreter. He first referred to their miserable condition, which he affirmed had been brought on by means of their own rebellious conduct, and he then upbraided them for their folly and delusion. He spoke at some length of the strength of the Romans, in subduing the European nations, in which he mentioned the Germans and the Britons, the one as a strong and powerful nation, and the other as being defended by the ocean walls. He then spoke of the Carthaginians, who were a courageous people, and had the most sagacious commanders, but they also were conquered by the valour of the Romans. He then referred to the numerous privileges granted to the Jews by the Romans, and how unwilling both he and his father, Vespasian, had been to inflict upon them the punishment they had deserved; and in conclusion, he said: "If you throw down your arms and deliver up your bodies to me, I grant you your lives; and I will act like a mild master of a family; what cannot be healed shall be punished, and the rest I will preserve for my own use."

To this gracious promise and stipulation made by

Titus the tyrants would not comply, but desired that they might have the privilege of leaving the city, with their wives and families, and be allowed to go uninterruptedly into the desert. This the Roman conqueror absolutely refused, and declared that he would treat them as his captives; and if they would not lay down their arms and quietly submit, he could compel them to submission by his army, and give them no quarter. He accordingly gave orders for his soldiers to burn and plunder the city, which command was very readily and willingly obeyed. The next day they set fire to the repository of the archives and the council house, and several other important places. They also burnt the houses which were filled with the bodies of those who died of famine and pestilence.

The seditious party again took courage, rushed into the palace, drove away the Romans, and slew about 8,000 people who had crowded into it. Fire, sword, and famine, were every day thinning the ranks of the living, and dreadfully increasing the number of the dead. Titus was now convinced that John and Simon would not surrender the upper city, and that it must either be taken by storm, or blockaded until all its inmates perished for want. He therefore determined to bring forward his battering rams, and breach the walls, but as this could not be done speedily, owing to a scarcity of timber to erect the necessary platforms, the work of slaughter went on daily until the seventh of September, when the powerful engines began to beat the walls of the city. The thunder of these powerful battering-rams

alarmed the Jews, they became dispirited, left the walls, and many of them took to their hiding places under ground. But others continued to stand their ground, and give battle to the invading enemy; they however were soon overcome by the Romans, and such as attempted to run away were instantly slain.

On the 8th day of the month the complete overthrow of that once beautiful and magnificent city was finished. When Titus came into it, he was filled with astonishment, and while gazing upon the strong and mighty towers, he exclaimed, "We have certainly had God for our assistant in this war, and it was no other than God that ejected the Jews out of these fortifications, for what could the hands of men or any machines do towards overthrowing these towers?" The reader may be astonished to hear that although more than a million of human beings perished during the siege, there were 97,000 taken captive when the city was destroyed. Many of these were afterwards devoured by wild beasts to gratify the barbarous Romans, some were banished, and others were sold for slaves. Such as made their escape fled to various parts of the surrounding nations for refuge; so that the Jewish nation was completely ruined, its inhabitants being either annihilated or scattered. Titus gave orders, before leaving Jerusalem, that the entire city and the remaining part of the temple should be totally demolished, but the three towers of the upper city, viz., Phasaelus, Hippicus, and Mariamne, should remain standing, and also a portion of the wall, to afford a camp for such as formed the garrison.

John surrendered himself a prisoner, and his life was spared, but Simon took refuge in a cave. When starved out, he was taken when attempting to make his escape, and sent to Rome to grace the triumph of Titus, after which he was put to death.

After the siege was over Titus generously rewarded such of his soldiers as had distinguished themselves in performing great exploits during the war. He gave to some crowns of gold, to others rich ornaments, such as spears of gold and ensigns of silver, and amongst others he shared a portion of the spoils of the city. Thus terminated the siege of Jerusalem, and with it came the ruin of the Jewish nation. Nothing remained in the land of Palestine to resist the Roman invaders but the garrisons of three strongholds, who were rash enough to prolong the contest with these conquerors and spoilers. These fortresses were Herodium, Machærus, and Masada. The famous and noted city of Herodium speedily capitulated on the approach of Lucilius Bassus, who succeeded Titus in the command of the Roman forces. The other two garrisons, relying on their impregnable position, resolved to give battle to the powerful enemy rather than quietly yield their independency. The legionary troops first marched against Machærus. This fortress was situated on the eastern side of the Jordan, on the summit of a lofty rock, protected on all sides by deep ravines, which could neither be crossed nor filled up by the besieger of the citadel. This town and citadel was built by the famous Alexander Jannæus, during his struggles with the Arabian freebooters, as a

check upon their incursions. It was afterwards beautified and strengthened by Herod the Great, who adorned it with a magnificent palace, and supplied it with water and the munitions of war, so as to enable it to withstand the most protracted siege. Had it not been for a singular incident which occurred in reference to a young and valiant man being taken captive by a powerful Egyptian, serving in the Roman army, the siege of this fortress might have been protracted to a great length ; but the citadel was surrendered to spare the life of this gallant young man (Eleazar). The strangers who occupied the lower part of the city were opposed to the treaty, and disputed the entrance of the besiegers, but were soon defeated with a loss of 1,700 men. Bassus dismantled the citadel, and then proceeded to the forest of Jarden, where a large number of homeless fugitives from Jerusalem and other places had collected. He invested these unhappy and defenceless refugees with his cavalry troops, and on their attempting to escape they were repulsed, and about 3,000 of them were slain. “During the course of these military operations Bassus died, and Flavius Silva assumed the command of the Roman forces in Palestine, which now lay utterly desolate, while Cæsar had actually issued his imperial orders that Judea should be exposed for sale. Alas for thee, delightful land !”

But there yet remained one unsubdued, brave, and desperate band, who had taken refuge in the fortress of Masada, and frowned defiance upon the masters of the world. This fortress was situated near the western

coast of the Dead Sea, a few miles from its southern extremity. It was built on the summit of an enormous rock, comprehending a considerable area. This mountainous rock was surrounded by chasms and defiles of great depth, the ascent from which was dangerously steep; the fortress could be approached by a winding or serpentine path. The town and citadel were originally constructed by Jonathan the Maccabean, during the glorious struggle of the nation against their Syro-Grecian oppressors. When Herod was made king of Judea he added to the work of Jonathan a splendid palace, as well as additional fortifications, and stored the fortress with immense quantities of provisions of various kinds, that it would afford protection and accommodation in time of need, against either foreign invaders, or insurgents in case of revolt; Herod himself more than once took refuge within its walls, as we have already shown in the preceding chapters.

Without attempting a particular description of this marvellous place of refuge, we may at once pronounce it to have been one of the most capacious, splendid, and strongly fortified citadels which was ever constructed in any nation; and it was so arranged in reference to its interior accommodations, as to afford the greatest possible security. It moreover contained vast magazines of granaries and stores of various kinds of vegetable food, which owing to its peculiar temperature would keep sound and fit for use for many years: Josephus says, "for nearly a century." This extraordinary preservation of food, in Masada, is attributed to the ex-

treme purity of the atmosphere, being at an elevation above the deleterious vapours which hovered over the surrounding plains.

In addition to its fortifications and supplies of articles of consumption it contained a famous armoury and arsenal, so that 10,000 men might be readily equipped, besides large stores of unwrought iron, brass, and lead.

Masada was the last stronghold of the insurgent Jews. City after city had been destroyed; Jerusalem had been taken, plundered, and burnt, and its matchless sanctuary consumed with fire; 1,500,000 persons had lost their lives in the terrible struggles, besides tens of thousands who had been sold as slaves. The land was laid most desolate. Herodium had yielded to the blast, and Machærus had been taken by stratagem. Masada was the only remaining place of refuge in the whole land of Judea. In this place there were about a thousand refugees, consisting of men, women, and children; these were besieged by the Romans under the command of Flavius Silva, the newly-appointed procurator of the country. The enemy completely encircled the fortress, and thereby precluded the possibility of their escape. The besieged clearly saw and grievously felt their position, and were led to acknowledge that God was against them; but still they were determined not to surrender to the Romans; rather than do this they would destroy themselves. Eleazar, who had command of the fortress, harangued his suffering companions, strongly urging them to self-destruction, or to take away each other's lives, rather than allow

themselves to fall alive into the hands of the enemy. They yielded to his eloquent and impassioned appeals, and unanimously agreed to sacrifice their lives. "They embraced their wives with convulsive tenderness; they kissed their startled and wondering children with strange tears, and the next moment, with unshrinking hands, stabbed them to the heart. There was no hesitation, no exception. The horrible necessity to which they were impelled was felt by them to be justified by the release which it ensured from their diver miseries." "Those who committed this terrible tragedy, in taking away the lives of their dearest relatives, were overwhelmed with horror, and longed to die that they might rejoin their victims as speedily as possible; therefore, after they had piled up their riches and set fire to them, ten were chosen by lot to kill the rest. This having been done a second lot was cast for one to kill the rest of the survivors, and he, having accomplished his awful task, deliberately fell on his sword and expired." All these stern-souled but misguided patriots perished with the conviction that not a single living being remained to give information of the case, or to grace the triumph of the detested Romans; but two women and five children had concealed themselves in a subterraneous passage, and remained alive to relate the dreadful story.

The next morning the Romans entered the citadel, when they were astonished to find not a single opponent disputing their entrance; all was silent as death. At length the terrified women came from their conceal-

ment, and related the particulars of the awful tragedy which had taken place the day previous. The Romans could scarcely believe their statements, but when they penetrated the palace to extinguish the fire they were horror-stricken to discover the long pile of dead bodies orderly arranged on the floors, which demonstrated the truth of what had been related.

“ With the fall of this fortress was extinguished the last hope of the Jews, and the subjugation of Judea to the Roman power became henceforth complete. But where imperial victors found a smiling land, teeming with plenty and prosperity, they left a well-nigh depopulated wilderness. Masada was dismantled, and, ere long, abandoned, and its ramparts have never since that hour echoed to the tramp of the sentinel, nor its deserted palaces resounded with the clash of arms.”

In the preceding historical sketches of God's ancient people we have seen them graciously restored by the hand of providence, and brought back out of captivity from Babylon to their ancient and beloved inheritance; assisted by the Persian kings in rebuilding the city and re-establishing their venerable hierarchy, when they enjoyed peace and prosperity; afterwards subjected to the Greco-Macedonian conquerors; brought under the Egyptian yoke; crushed by their Syro-Grecian tyrants. From that state of misery and degradation we have seen them rise to majestic greatness and national grandeur and glory under the judicious and military power of the heroic Maccabeans, who, in a long series of terrible struggles and bloody battles,

subdued their enemies and rose superior to surrounding nations. Again they became embroiled in civil wars under the injudicious malgovernment of Alexander Jannæus ; distracted and divided under the feeble administration of Hyrcanus the Second ; restored again by the craft and political energy of Herod the Great, and by him brought in bondage to Rome, and finally ruined. We have marked their apostacy, sedition, infidelity, and crimes ; the Roman invasion ; and have seen their cities demolished, their palaces and citadels destroyed ; their Holy House burned ; one million, five hundred thousand of them cut down with famine and sword, pestilence and fire, and the remainder of their population either taken prisoners or fled as refugees into other countries. And now, having performed our task according to the best of our ability, we shall follow the “ wandering Jews ” no further, but would earnestly pray that he who scattered them, on account of their infidelity, pride, and manifold transgressions, may grant unto them speedy repentance ; that he, according to his promise, may gather them in again ; and that, like their forefathers when released out of Babylonish captivity, they may return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads ; that Jerusalem may yet again become a praise in the earth, and the hills and dales of Palestine resound with praises to God and to the Lamb.

We have no need to say much in reference to the religious and ecclesiastical condition of the Jews during the last period of their national existence. After they

rejected Christ, they were no longer regarded by God as his peculiar people. By this act of infidelity they impiously cast off and blindly despised the most glorious revelations which God ever made to them in the teaching and miracles of his Son our Saviour. Therefore the light which had heretofore guided them was withdrawn. The candlestick was removed out of its place, and they were left to grovel in darkness and stumble by error into sin. Their priests were mere vassals of a pagan monarch, their religion insulted and despised, and their pontiffs tools in the hands of their heathen governors. There were therefore continual changes in the office of their high priesthood, to serve the purposes of those tyrants who ruled over them; and those who professed to be the most religious, the Zealots, were little better than a band of robbers and murderers, who, under a pretext of zeal for God and their national religion, committed the most audacious and revolting crimes.

In the midst of all this war and crime Christianity continued to spread, not only in Judea, but also in the surrounding provinces, and in several parts of the western empire. During this period, notwithstanding the bloody persecution of Nero, we read of Christian churches being established in Jerusalem and other parts of Judea and Galilee, in Samaria, Cæsarea, Antioch, Ethiopia, Galatia, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, at Athens, Corinth, Colosse, Rome, and in the seven principal towns of Asia Minor. Thus, in the midst of fire, sword, and persecution, political confusion, and great calamities, the word of the Lord mightily spread

and was glorified, in the salvation of thousands and millions, who abandoned heathenism and embraced the truths of the gospel. While the Jews and their nation and their corrupted religion sunk and perished, Christianity grew and spread. The Roman emperors, who had overthrown and crushed the Jewish nation into nonentity, who had subdued kingdoms, and compelled all the civil authorities of the civilized world to bow in submission before them, could not, with all their influence and power, annihilate Christianity, or compel the soldiers of Christ to ground their arms and submit to the rites and requirements of heathenism. Christianity was not like Judaism, a national religion which consisted in forms and ceremonies. It was for all the world and for every creature, spiritual and powerful, inspiring the heart with unquenchable zeal and indomitable fortitude, which enabled its votaries to bid defiance to all earthly powers, however great and terrible. The first Christians were instructed by their Divine Master to "fear not them that can kill the body," but rather to rejoice in persecution for righteousness' sake, in the full assurance that great would be their reward in heaven. With these principles and with this faith they were enabled to stand in the storm as well as in the calm, and to say, in the midst of all sorts of persecution, and in the prospect of martyrdom, None of these things move us, neither count we our lives dear to us ; so that we may win Christ, and receive the crowns of life which are laid up for us in immortal glory.

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"In your PULPIT you give the drift and spirit of the discourse: and it is just this which makes your periodical a welcome visitor to my study. As I run over its pages, I get a bird's-eye view of the gospel battle-field, and see my brethren of different denominations fighting the fight of faith, in various ways, for the common victory of Christ."

For a similar reason, Dr. Cuyler, in a letter to us, pronounces the publication "very valuable."

In our reports of sermons, in this publication, all considerable denominations and all sections of this and other countries are represented, so that an opportunity is given for the study of all styles of sermonizing. What can be more important to a clergyman than this? It enables him to learn from his brothers, as do lawyers from their fellow lawyers in their law journals. In this is the advantage to scientists of scientific monthlies, to doctors of medical periodicals, to farmers of agricultural papers, to artists of art journals. Are clergymen alone to refuse to learn from one another, to be isolated, to be shut up to their own narrow experience, because of a poorly instructed, childish fear that they may harm their independence, endanger their originality? The *Hartford Religious Herald*, in noticing this objection, says that: Truly independent and genuine preachers will not be troubled with this fear. Rev. J. C. Ryle, one of the ablest and most conservative preachers in England, in a lecture to clergymen in London, recently said:

"Do you ever read the sermons of Spurgeon? I am not a bit ashamed to say that I often do. I like to gather hints about preaching from all quarters. * * * Preachers ought always to examine and analyze sermons that draw people together."

ITS POPULARITY.

We have received, literally, thousands of letters from clergymen, in this and other countries (of the number are presidents of colleges, professors in theological seminaries, editors of some of our ablest religious journals), commending most highly this monthly, especially as now improved.

Says one, a professor in a college:

"Your publications are most valuable in perfecting styles of preaching. They will mark an era in the history of the American Pulpit."

Says another: "There may be a better work of this kind published somewhere, but I have never seen it."

Another: "I do not see how your improved PULPIT can be improved."

Another: "Your hints, your comments upon Scripture, the elucidation of rules of homiletics are most helpful, and cannot but prove of great benefit to clergymen everywhere and of every variety of experience."

Another: "A clergyman's magazine of this nature must have an incalculably good effect in widening and deepening and refining the culture of the clergy. It brings us together, and not anything so refines people as association."

Of the many comments which have appeared in the religious press, we quote the following from the October number, just issued, of that ablest of American quarterlies, *The Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review*:

"It speaks well for our friends, the enterprising publishers, and for the ministry of the day, that they are meeting with such decided success in the several works they have undertaken. A year since they started *The Metropolitan Pulpit*, which has already reached a circulation of 6,000 copies, and is to be doubled in size in future issues. Six months ago they issued the first number of *The Complete Preacher*—a much larger work—which has already reached a circulation of about 4,000 copies. And now they have published the *Homilist*, which bids fair to attain to something of the immense popularity which it has in Great Britain. The success of such works is a marked indication of a new and rapidly developing interest in the methods of preaching. Happily, our preachers of all denominations are not content with the modes and attainments of the past, but are reaching after all the light and help available in order to improve upon them."

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